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**Remapping Ouida:**  
**Her Works, Correspondence and Social Concerns**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the Degree

of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

in the University of Edinburgh

by Barbara Vrachnas

University of Edinburgh

**Declaration**

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. J. ...', written over a horizontal line.

## Table of Contents

List of Illustrations and Acronyms .....	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
Permission from NYPL.....	6
Abstract .....	7
 Introduction.....	 8
Ouida and her Publishing Affairs .....	25
<i>Strathmore</i> and the Sensation Novel.....	72
Parody and Burnand's <b>STRAPMORE!</b> .....	104
Abuse, Mania and Confinement in <i>Folle-Farine</i> .....	127
The Sense of Morality in <i>Moths</i> .....	164
Mythology and the Artist in <i>In Maremma</i> .....	184
Conclusion .....	219
 Works Cited .....	 222
Appendix: Transcriptions of Ouida's Correspondence in The Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations ...	246

## List of Illustrations and Acronyms

### Illustration:

Linley Sambourne's Caricature of Ouida in *Punch*, August 20, 1881, Page 83.....104

### Acronyms:

<i>BQR</i>	<i>British Quarterly Review</i>
<i>CEJ</i>	<i>Chambers's Edinburgh Journal</i>
<i>FR</i>	<i>Fortnightly Review</i>
<i>PMG</i>	<i>Pall Mall Gazette</i>
<i>QR</i>	<i>Quarterly Review</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>

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Finally, a wholehearted thank you to my parents, brother and sister-in-law, words really cannot express the love and support that they have given me, and to my one and only niece who could make me laugh when nobody else could. A huge thanks to all my friends especially to Sappho, who has put up with me as much as I have this past year, to my lifetime friend Melina for being with me in spirit and for uncannily moving to New York the same year I was planning to visit the NYPL and finally to Vasilis who has been the voice of reason in my head.

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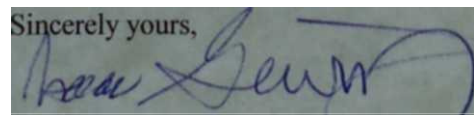
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## Abstract

This thesis examines the popular and non-canonical Victorian novelist Ouida (Maria Louise de la Ramée) her relationship with her publishers and the reception of her works. In particular, through the study of published and unpublished correspondence, as well as nineteenth century periodicals, certain views concerning the writer and her oeuvre will be revised and amended, especially in the context of social and moral standards, anticipated from the female fictional character and the artist, the writer. The first chapter will concentrate on Ouida's correspondence and will argue that the author's reputation and sales were not only damaged by her ostensibly immoral plots but also as a result of her publishers's differing priorities. In order to delineate the content of these 'indecent' novels and later the impact they had on reviewers, critics and readers, as well as Ouida's writing, four of her three-decker novels have been selected for critical discussion. *Strathmore* (1865) is discussed in relation to sensation fiction and marriage law and *Folle-Farine* (1871) as an examination of inequality between classes and genders. Francis Cowley Burnand's parody *Strapmore* (1878) is then read as a critical account of and response to Ouida's ideologies. The thesis will then examine the controversy surrounding *Moths* (1880), and *In Maremma* (1882) will be read as a response to this controversy through its relation to mythology and the representation of the artist. The analysis of these novels and Ouida's correspondence with her agent and publishers will trace the path that led to the gradual decline in her reputation and the posterior obscurity of her works.



## Introduction

*“Everybody is so talented nowadays that the only people I care to honor as deserving real distinction are those who remain in obscurity.”*

*The Hand of Ethelberta*, Thomas Hardy

The core of this thesis will be Marie Louise de la Ramée, widely known by her pseudonym Ouida (1839 –1908), who was a popular, prolific and a distinctly peculiar Victorian author. Ouida published over forty novels, fifty short stories and thirty essays in her lifetime and apart from a writer she was also an animal activist and rescuer. She was born in Bury St. Edmunds, a town in Suffolk, England to an English mother and a French father. Her *nom de plume* ‘Ouida’ was the authoress’s infantile mispronunciation of her name Louisa. Ouida began publishing her work in her late teens, early twenties but became well-known in her thirties. Carol Poster writes in her article “Oxidization is a Feminist Issue: Acidity, Canonicity, and Popular Victorian Female Authors” that Ouida played a fundamental role in the lives and works of writers such as Oscar Wilde and Ronald Firbank, and the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* states that “she appealed to the likes of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Mrs. Henry Wood” (Poster, 1996: 287 and “Ouida”, 1995: 260). However, as it will be discussed Ouida was also considered a very extravagant author and woman which affected her work and reputation failing thus to leave a lasting imprint on literature.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Ouida was only one of the numerous commercially successful female writers of a similar calibre, such as Ellen Wood (1814–1887),

Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835–1915) and Rhoda Broughton (1840–1920). In his work *A Victorian Publisher: A Study of the Bentley Papers*, Royal A. Gettmann states that from 1865 to 1885 a three-decker novel was written either by Wood, Braddon, Broughton or Ouida (Gettmann, 1960: 249). A decade later, Henry Curwen's study in *A History of Bookseller: The Old and the New* written in 1873 shows that in the 1871 clearance catalogue of one of the most prominent circulating libraries in the Victorian era, that of Charles Edward Mudie's (1818–1890) "(and this catalogue is one of the best guides to the popular novel literature of the last few years)" from "441 distinct works, 212 are written by men and 229 by women" (Finkelstein, 2004 and Curwen, 1873: 429). While this research surveyed the High Victorian period, Simon Eliot's work *A Measure of Popularity: Public Library Holdings* lists twenty-one Victorian bestsellers in the late nineteenth century, between 1883 and 1892, from 28 libraries and indicates that "the most widely stocked novelist" was Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Ellen Wood is in the third place, Margaret Oliphant eighth, Charlotte Yonge tenth, Ouida sixteenth and Rhoda Broughton twenty-first (Eliot, 1992: 3). These studies attest the plethora of popular and profuse female authors and document Ouida's presence amongst them.

However, while bestselling in their day, these popular writers did not become literary classics, such as Emily Brontë or George Eliot. Taking into account the magnitude of their popularity after the mid-nineteenth century, evidence shows that women authors were unreasonably and unfairly neglected after the middle of the following century. Despite their contemporary success these authors were not included in the canon of great nineteenth century British novels as this was formulated in the first half of the twentieth century and the question is why. Why were these women forgotten? John Sutherland in *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction* lists 878 Victorian writers of which 312 are women (Sutherland, 1976: 2). This

is a substantially high figure considering the comparatively unequal amount of reprints and criticism available in the twentieth century regarding works by female Victorian writers in comparison to that of their male counterparts. Interestingly enough, “Among the men, no less than 100 had law as either a concurrent or previous vocation. Among the women, the vast bulk had no other recorded activity than being wives (167), or spinsters (113)” (2). This could offer an explanation as to why some women writers, who refused to be stigmatised by their gender or marital status, wished to veil their identity by using pen names or publishing anonymously, thus injuring their reputation and subsequently falling into obscurity. In another study, Gettmann affirms that in the House of Bentley in the 1870’s and 1880’s the proportion of books written by women writers were doubled (Gettmann, 1960: 248). Thus, if this occurred in a very prominent publishing firm of the mid-nineteenth century then the Tinsley brothers, Chapman & Hall and Chatto & Windus, who all had a fair share of popular women writers such as Ouida, Braddon, Broughton and Wood, must have had similar figures. So, if women were often dominant figures in the Victorian publishing industry their marginalisation is undoubtedly unmerited. And the most plausible reason for exclusion from the canon of the previous century is that these women and several others challenged the boundaries of conventional literature, engaging with motifs such as adultery, seduction, physical and mental abuse, sadism and masochism, chauvinism, avarice, prostitution, subjects which most female Victorian writers evaded. The dominant patriarchal moral culture of the period expected the highest personal standards from women in the public eye, consequently, this necessitated equivalent demeanour from their female fictional characters as well, who epitomised either the ‘angel in the house’ or its censured opposite<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to Coventry Patmore’s poem “Angel in the House” (1854), in which the poet depicts the ideal wife and mother in the Victorian Era: dutiful, devoted and docile. See Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House: Books I & II*, London: Haggerston Press with Boston College, 1998.

Similarly, as Heather Marcovitch claims in her review of Talia Schaffer's *Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (2000): "Posterity [...] has not been kind" to female writers such as Ouida and is scarcely mentioned by critics while Schaffer herself presents Ouida as disregarded by contemporary criticism despite her vital role in the literary scene of the second half of the nineteenth century (Marcovitch, 2001: 240). Although deeply interested in female chastity and morality, Ouida chose to delve into their social repercussions and discussed motifs such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph, often causing a commotion amongst publishers, reviewers and readers. However, Ouida might have gone one step further than her contemporaries. One of the principal reasons as to why she was omitted from twentieth century criticism lies in the fact that her works, apart from being explicit social diatribes and characterised by exuberance, also criticised the vulgarity and self-indulgence of the upper class. And although they were considered exceedingly popular, they were also deemed inappropriate, over-emotional and unrealistic. Referring to Ouida and other marginalised authors Poster states: "One could place them in the context of their era's growing feminist and social awareness", and even regarded them as precursors of gender equality although they were not associated with the espousal of the women's suffrage movement (Poster, 1996: 287).

This is another key reason that led to the neglect of Ouida's writings and in general, even when compared to her contemporaries, there are several and specific reasons to why Ouida suffered more as a writer; her sexual discourses and politics were intricate and her antagonism to the suffrage and the New Woman meant and means that it is difficult to reclaim her as a feminist foremother; and therefore she was side-lined by second-wave feminism in the 1970s and '80s, at a time when female sensation writers such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon were successfully 'rehabilitated'. Nicola Diane Thompson in her book *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman*

*Question* explains that although feminist critics have revived the interest in Victorian women in the last thirty years, “they have not considered the works of most non-canonical women novelists in depth” (Thompson, 1999: 11). Indeed, during these thirty years there have only been articles and brief chapters on Ouida’s work, who was and still is considered non-canonical as a result of her challenging social ideologies as well as her unconventional Francophile handling of people and life in her fiction. Even in the beginning of the twenty-first century, there are still works of criticism such as Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler's collection of essays, *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century Women: Writers and Artists in Italy* (2003) which have excluded or overlooked Ouida’s fiction, an author who wrote in Italy for over thirty years, therefore her omission somewhat is unjustifiable. Moreover, there is no reference whatsoever of Ouida in *Women Writers and Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012) by Ann R. Hawkins and Maura C. Ives who will be mentioned in this thesis since they discuss many popular mid-Victorian female writers such as Wood and Louisa May Alcott. It will be also become evident that Ouida was treated unsympathetically in all four of her early twentieth-century biographies, which surely exacerbated her status as a writer and led to her disregard until the end of the century.

It is only within this last decade that we see an upsurge of interest in Victorian non-canonical and disregarded female writers and especially in Ouida. Although most of her works have been out of print since the mid 1980s, during the last decade more than half of her novels have been reprinted. Moreover, during the last five years a significant amount of articles and chapters and a few books have been written proclaiming a substantial revival of her oeuvre. Along with Schaffer, whom I have already mentioned, the only critics who have studied Ouida’s works in depth are Jane Jordan, Pamela K. Gilbert, Andrew King, Natalie Schroeder and Shari

Hodges Holt. Jordan's PhD thesis, "The Writings of 'Ouida' (Marie Louise de la Ramée, 1839-1908)", is if not the most, one of the most in depth-analyses of Ouida's works. Completed in 1995, the thesis discusses Ouida's relationship with all of her British publishers, she focuses on *Under Two Flags* (1867), *Folle-Farine*, *In Maremma*, *Moths*, *Wanda* (1883) and *Guilderoy* (1889) and also addresses the issue of gender in Ouida's writing as well as her connection with the New Woman and women's suffrage in Britain. Jordan has also written several book chapters and articles regarding Ouida's life and the way in which she was depicted in her biographies as well as chapters concerning her association to the sensation novel. One of these articles published in *Anglistica Pisana* in 2009 is "The English George Sand? Ouida, the French Novel and late Victorian Literary Censorship" in which she discusses Ouida's affiliation to French literature, the publications and translations of her works in France as well as her essays and articles concerning literary censorship by British publishers, editors and librarians. In 2010 Jordan writes a book chapter entitled "Ouida" which is included in Pamela K. Gilbert's *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, examining this time the writer's association with sensation fiction through the brief analysis of her sensationalistic novels: *Held in Bondage*, *Strathmore* and *Under Two Flags*. She continues her discussion of the sensation novel and Ouida in her article "'Romans Français Écrits en Anglais': Ouida, the Sensation Novel and Fin-de-Siècle Literary Censorship" (2013), in *Women's Writing*, where she refers to the fact that Ouida's novels were deemed too sensational for Britain and thus reminiscent of and as scandalous as French realist and naturalist fiction. Jordan also discusses theatrical adaptations of the author's novels and the way in which the latter were morally censored in order to satisfy a conservative British audience. Lastly, Jordan in collaboration with Andrew King published in 2013 *Ouida and Victorian Popular Fiction* which includes a selection of essays. Jordan's chapter "'Between Men':

Romantic Friendship in Ouida's Early Novels" focuses on male friendship and hinted homosexuality in Ouida's *Strathmore, Chandos* (1866) and *Under Two Flags*.

Professor Andrew King has also written several book chapters and articles concerning Ouida's fiction. Like Jordan, he published an article in *Anglistica Pisana* in 2009 entitled "The Origins of Ouida's *Pascarèl* (1873): The Combination Novel, Myths of the Female Artist and the Commerce of Art" which concentrates on the first novel Ouida wrote upon moving to Italy, *Pascarèl*. He delves upon the depiction of the female artist in the novel, briefly referring to other Ouidean artists in *Folle-Farine* and *Tricotrin*. As mentioned in the previous paragraph King edited with Jordan Ouida and *Victorian Popular Fiction* (2013) in which he also wrote a chapter, "Ouida 1839-1908: Quantities, Aesthetics, Politics". His main focus here is the ways in which a popular and prolific writer such as Ouida, and her earnings, affected her aesthetic and political stances concerning fiction and popular art. Lastly, in the same year King also published "Crafting the Woman Artist: Ouida and *Ariadne*" in *Crafting the Woman Professional in the Long Nineteenth Century: Artistry and Industry in Britain*. The essay deals with Ouida's concept of the woman artist in *Ariadne* and her exploration of beauty, aesthetics and the ethics of art not only in the novel but also for Ouida in general.

Pamela K. Gilbert is another important critic who as we have seen edited the long and all-encompassing *A Companion to Sensation Fiction* in which Jordan, King, Schroeder and Schaffer—amongst many other prominent critics of sensation fiction and its adjacent genres, authors and novels—have contributed a chapter. Gilbert's first work regarding Ouida is "Ouida: Romantic Exchange" in her book *Desire, Disease and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels* (1997). In this chapter Gilbert discusses *Under Two Flags* and *Folle-Farine* in order to display Ouida's shift from the sensational to the aesthetic, from Britain and colonial Africa to

France, commenting on issues of gender roles, sexuality and class conflict in *Under Two Flags* and the objectification and commodification of the female body in *Folle-Farine*. Gilbert's next essay was published in Nicola Diane Thompson *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (1999) entitled "Ouida and the other New Woman". The anticipation of the New Woman in Ouida's characters is discussed in this essay and elucidated through the examination of Cigarette in *Under Two Flags* and Folle-Farine in *Folle-Farine*. As Gilbert states: "The themes of women exercising power in traditionally masculine roles, of women who exercise their sexuality freely, for their own pleasure and outside the boundaries of exchange implied by marriage or prostitution would become, in the nineties, key components of New Woman fiction" (Gilbert, 1999: 185). And according to Gilbert Cigarette along with Folle-Farine were merely early specimens of this 'woman'.

One of the first works that rediscovered Ouida in the twenty first century—in which I read about Ouida for the first time—is *Forgotten Female Aesthetes* by Talia Schaffer. Schaffer devotes a chapter to Ouida entitled "The Dandy in the House: Ouida and the Aesthetic Novel". After explaining the way in which Ouida rewrites the Gothic in her late novels such as *Moths*, she argues through the analysis of *Afternoon* (1883) that Ouida should be accredited with the invention of the Aesthetic novel. Schaffer continues her discussion about aestheticism in Ouida's works in her study of *Princess Napraxine* (1884). The critic goes on to comment briefly on more than five novels by Ouida maintaining her focus on the Gothic and the Aesthetic in the works of 'forgotten' female authors. Schaffer reiterates her argument concerning the origins of the Aesthetic narrative in "The Origins of the Aesthetic Novel: Ouida, Wilde, and the Popular Romance" published in *Wilde Writings: Contextual Conditions* (2003). In this essay Schaffer talks about the influence of Ouida's works on aesthetic writers such as Wilde and the Aesthetic



novel in general. She traces this influence in *Dorian Gray* and examines *Chandos*, *Under Two Flags*, *Afternoon*, *Princess Napraxine* and *Othmar* (1885) in order to reinforce her argument regarding not only the effect of Ouida's works on Wilde but also as mentioned previously on aesthetic authors overall.

Finally, Natalie Schroeder is another critic I will be referring to in this thesis. Schroeder has edited and published three of Ouida's novels within the last decade: *Moths*, *In Maremma* and *Under Two Flags*. She has also written a chapter about the latter novel along with her husband Ronald A. Schroeder included in Gilbert's *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*. Her most influential work however "Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion: M. E. Braddon and Ouida" was published in 1988 in *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. In this article Schroeder examines *Strathmore* and *Folle-Farine* in juxtaposition to Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and *Aurora Floyd* (1863). She compares the female protagonists in terms of sexuality, transgressiveness, aggression and power. In 2008 Schroeder along with Shari Hodges Holt published *Ouida the Phenomenon* which could be considered as a small encyclopedia of Ouida's works since it offers summaries of at least twenty of the author's novels. Each chapter focuses on a certain decade and refers to two or three novels, aiming to depict Ouida's writing style and her views concerning social, gender and political issues of the Victorian era.

The way in which my approach in this thesis will be different from that of the scholars mentioned above and other critics, will become evident initially through the examination of Ouida's published and unpublished correspondence with her main publishers and solicitor and lies mainly on the lack of extensive research of the fact that her popularity was conditioned by commercial conventions. The commercial success of the late nineteenth century woman author

makes her dealings with publishers and the public—which enabled that success—a useful starting point for critical discussion of their work. Therefore, Ouida’s correspondence with her publishers Chatto & Windus and her agent James Anderson Rose will be crucial to this thesis since it will shed light on their relationship, the reception of the writer’s work and her attitude towards people and society. In particular, Ouida’s affiliation with her publishers and her opinions concerning classes and gender seen through her fiction, as well as secondary criticism, will be the main topic of discussion. Ouida’s engagement with the dominant moral values of her time did not happen in a vacuum. Rather, these values made an impact on her career through the pressures of the literary marketplace; that is, in her necessary collaboration with her publishers, and in the responses of reviewers to her work.

Chatto and Windus’s letters to Ouida are held in the Special Collections at the University of Reading. The collection consists of 252 letters, of which 245 have been transcribed in M.J. Nieman’s unpublished Master’s dissertation, “Recasting a Victorian Woman Writer: Chatto and Windus’ Letters to Ouida” (1994). Amongst these letters there are nine autograph letters from Ouida. The seven additional letters have been transcribed by me, one of which is again written by the author herself. Nieman claims that most of Ouida’s autograph letters to Chatto and Windus were destroyed in the First World War; however, approximately 400 letters,—mainly unpublished and those that have been published are in most cases fragments of any one letter—from the writer to her publishers are held in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, of which I have transcribed 61, 48 included in this thesis (Nieman, 1994: xxiii)<sup>2</sup>. The author’s correspondence held in the Berg Collection also consists of 143 letters from Ouida to Rose,

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<sup>2</sup> The Appendix at the end of this thesis does not only consist of complete letters to Chatto and Windus and her correspondence with Rose, but also extracts of several letters. This is due to the fact that my time in New York was limited.

which have been scarcely examined and published, 30 of which have been transcribed by me for the purpose of this thesis.

Apart from Ouida's correspondence with her publishers and Rose I will also be examining mainly nineteenth and early mid-twentieth century journals and criticism regarding the writer's relationship with the aforementioned and the novels that will be scrutinised in this thesis. These early sources of Ouida's reputation and reception have not been examined extensively by scholars. Therefore, they are vital to my research since they provide evidence from writers and publishers themselves and delineate, without intermediary criticism, the literary scene during the mid and late nineteenth century. The only four biographies written about Ouida will be discussed as well; in 1914 Elizabeth Lee wrote *Ouida: A Memoir*, a biography which also follows Ouida's publishing career mostly through the author's correspondence with Baron Tauchnitz, her German publisher. In 1938 Yvonne Ffrench in *Ouida: A Study in Ostentation*, another biographical work, focuses more on the correspondence between the writer and other writers and friends. In 1950 Eileen Bigland published *Ouida: A Passionate Victorian*, which apart from the inclusion and reiteration of material first found in Lee and Ffrench, delves into the problematics of Ouida's relationship with Chapman and Hall without, as will be shown, validating her arguments with substantial or new evidence. Lastly, *The Fine and the Wicked: The Life and Times of Ouida* by Monica Stirling was published in 1958. The last of Ouida's biographies, in a similar style as Bigland's, possibly intended to mark the fiftieth anniversary of her death, paraphrases what has been said in the first two biographies. The only new material that is present in Stirling's work is details about her relationship with Marchese della Stufa which does however offer insight into that particular phase of Ouida's life.

Although viewed by biographers and critics as an eccentric person to work with, the first chapter of this thesis will reveal that Ouida was not treated fairly by her publishers, who chiefly sought for financial security. The chapter will begin with a focus—mostly—on Ouida’s unpublished correspondence with Chatto and Windus, while, her collaboration with her first publishers, Chapman and Hall will be examined through her letters to Rose. I will then argue that the author’s reputation was not only injured by her allegedly unethical novels, but also because of conflicting opinions in her relationship with her publishers. Four of Ouida’s three-volume novels and a parody of her works have been chosen for critical analysis, in order to outline the subject matters of her ‘improper’ plots and the response to her social sketches. Three of these novels are under-examined, while all of them denote a significant change or moment in Ouida’s career.

The second chapter of this thesis discusses *Strathmore* (1865) in the context of sensation fiction and its relation to nineteenth century laws concerning divorce, mainly through the examination of the main female character, Lady Marion Vavasour. Natalie Schroeder, Shari Hodges Holt and Carla Molloy are the only critics who have analysed the novel and there approaches, which were published on the same year, are quite different. Schroeder in “Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion: M. E. Braddon and Ouida” focuses more on Lady Vavasour’s eroticism, self-love and narcissism whereas in *Ouida the Phenomenon* (2008) along with Holt they concentrate more on *Strathmore* and his transgressions, discussing again the sexuality and the alternation of gender roles and sexual power between the protagonists. Molloy, on the other hand, in her PhD thesis “The Art of Popular Fiction: Gender, Authorship and Aesthetics in the Writing of Ouida” (2008) claims that Lady Vavasour exposes the performative nature of the domestic angel in the house and although less subtle she is quite similar to the

character of Lady Audley in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*. My chapter however will argue that Lady Vavasour cannot be categorized as a domestic heroine nor will she be viewed as a highly sexual character, but merely a provocative and vivacious coquette enacting intense femininity rather than angelic as in the case of Lady Audley. The novel and in particular Lady Vavasour will be regarded in juxtaposition to Lady Audley in an attempt to depict Ouida's sensationalism and concern with prevalent social issues such as adultery, female morality and marriages of convenience. Marion, unlike Lady Audley, encapsulates traits of several other well-known seductive mid-nineteenth century female characters such as Becky Sharp in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847-48), Arabella in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) and sexually transgressive but repentant women such as Tess in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and Sue in *Jude the Obscure*.

Within this chapter there will also be an analysis of Francis Cowley Burnand's unexplored parody *Strapmore* (1878), a burlesque amalgam of Ouida novels. This parody will be examined not only in terms of its popularity and facetious content but most importantly as a critical understanding of the author's extravagant upper class portrayals. Burnand parodies approximately ten of Ouida's novels which, apart from their popularity, also demonstrates their importance and influence on the literary scene since humourists would satirise predominantly promising or distinguished writers. In particular, this chapter will deal with Burnand's burlesque of *Strathmore* and *Folle-Farine* and will conclude that—contrary to nineteenth century periodical criticism—his novella is a parody as much as a decipherment of Ouida's writings.

The third chapter concentrates on the novel *Folle-Farine* (1871) and the themes of abuse, monomania and confinement. In this work Ouida shifts from high society novels and exposés of the upper class—as in *Strathmore*—to depictions of both upper and lower classes. The novel in

question has only been examined by two writers in depth: Pamela K. Gilbert and Natalie Schroeder. Pamela K. Gilbert in her chapter “Ouida: Romantic Exchange” in *Desire, Disease and the Body in Victorian Women’s Popular Novels* (1997) discusses the mental and physical violation of Folle-Farine, emphasising on masochism and empowerment within a sexual realm; while in her other chapter called “Ouida and the other New Woman” in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (1999) the critic concentrates on Folle-Farine’s sexual otherness and hybridity. Similarly, Natalie Schroeder in her article “Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion: M. E. Braddon and Ouida” (1988) stresses that *Folle-Farine* was indeed a sensation novel, in the vein of *Lady Audley’s Secret* and *Strathmore*, while in her book *Ouida the Phenomenon* (2008) she examines mainly sexual imagery through abuse, art and religion. These accounts of *Folle-Farine* are all sexually orientated and tend to focalise predominantly on the protagonist’s body rather than the mental ramifications of her abuse. This chapter however, will not concentrate on Folle-Farine’s sexuality but, rather on her mental and physical abuse which results in sacrificing and confining herself.

The first critical work written about the novel was actually in 1995 by Jane Jordan in her unpublished PhD thesis, “The Writings of ‘Ouida’ (Marie Louise de la Ramée, 1839-1908)”. Jordan analyses *Folle-Farine* in a brief chapter in which Ouida’s plot is deemed an eroticisation of female passivity and the misconception of female identity is also addressed. In addition, Talia Schaffer in *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* identifies those works by Ouida written between 1859 and 1879 as focused on the dandy and includes *Folle-Farine* as well, without, however, expanding upon this as she does in the case of

*Under Two Flags* (1867) (Schaffer, 2000: 124)<sup>3</sup>. It will, therefore, become evident in this chapter that *Folle-Farine* does not in fact fit in this category and, although the male characters in the novel do seem to possess a few dandyish traits, it will be seen that neither Arslàn nor Sartorian are dandies; on the contrary, the main character is female and a victim of rather *inelegant* men. Unlike the dandies or cruel adventuresses in *Strathmore* (1865), *Under Two Flags* (1867) *Tricotrin* (1869) and *Puck* (1870), the main characters in *Folle-Farine* differ greatly from those of her previous novels, especially that of *Folle-Farine*. In order to further explicate Ouida's themes the differences and analogies of her protagonist to earlier canonical and diachronic female characters such as Catherine in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Ruth in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853) will be examined.

The next chapter will be a discussion of *Moths* (1880), Ouida's most controversial novel. The analysis of the novel, through the depiction of the author's upper classes and the reception of her work in contemporary criticism and nineteenth century journals, will demonstrate the peak of her writing career. Critics that have written about *Moths* include Natalie Schroeder in *Ouida the Phenomenon*, Talia Schaffer in *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* and Jane Jordan in a subchapter of her PhD thesis. Schaffer briefly comments on the gothic themes and setting of the novel while Schroeder focuses on the issues of abuse, female autonomy and submission. Jordan carries out a close reading of the novel and briefly discusses marriage and law through the analysis of Vere's relationship with Zouroff and the reception of the novel in nineteenth century periodicals. Although this chapter *will* address issues

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary a dandy is: "One who studies above everything to dress elegantly and fashionably; a beau, fop, 'exquisite'".

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/47155?rskey=7Cgh1T&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>

Dorian Gray is an example of a fictional dandy in late nineteenth century British literature while Joris-Karl Huysmans' *Des Esseintes*, in *À Rebours*, is a perfect specimen of the decadent dandy.

of marriage and law it will mainly examine Ouida's vivid depictions of vanity, hypocrisy and pretence embedded in her aristocracy and gentry. Therefore, the author's views and opinions which evince a criticism of the vulgarity and immorality of the upper classes, and in turn received harsh criticism for its supposedly unethical and unrealistic portrayals, will be the 'scandalous' subject of this chapter.

The fifth and final chapter will concentrate on *In Maremma* (1882), the second to last of Ouida's Italian novels in which she returns to pessimistic plots, in the vein of *Folle-Farine*, after Chatto and Windus, amongst others, had deemed *Moths* a morally inappropriate work of fiction. By incorporating female mythological figures as personifications of her protagonist, Ouida, in a less obvious manner than that in *Moths*, still succeeds in conveying her standpoints concerning gender and class. Apart from Natalie Schroeder and Holt's chapter 'Subversion and Submission to Male Power in Ouida's Female Gothic' in *Ouida The Phenomenon* (2008) and Jane Jordan's chapter 'Daughters and Fathers: Deprivation and Desire in *Folle-Farine* and *In Maremma*' in her unpublished PhD thesis: "The Writings of 'Ouida'" (1995), *Maremma* has not been subjected to any extensive scrutiny analogous to that of her other novels. While Schroeder and Holt argue that Ouida employs the female gothic "to signify the heroine's ultimately futile renunciation of conventional female roles", this chapter will reflect on Ouida's unexplored strategy of implementing mythology in order to voice not only her thoughts but also to create what Andrew King calls "poetic vignettes" of specific characters and places (Schroeder and Holt, 2008: 153 and King, 2009: 8). Jordan on the other hand discusses about the male figures in *In Maremma*, the paternal authorities in Musa's life and the way in which they repeatedly violate the girl's identity and space. Taking this into account and the absence of Ouida's father throughout her



adult life the novel is also considered with regards to the artist—another recurring theme in the author's later novels—focusing on her self-portrayal and her depiction of art for art's sake.

These chapters will follow Ouida's response to a changing social and literary scene after the mid-nineteenth century, a scene which marked the embryonic stages of a period that would later disregard certain women writers. The purpose of this thesis is to recover and revise literary aspects of her marginalised oeuvre in addition to the literary importance of this forgotten writer.

## **Ouida and her Publishing Affairs**

*Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be.*

Robert Southey to Charlotte Brontë (1837)

Ouida had two main firms publishing her works: Chapman and Hall and Chatto and Windus. Her first novel, *Held in Bondage* (1863), was published by the Tinsley Brothers but was the only novel she published with them, since she moved to Chapman and Hall the same year<sup>4</sup>. The author worked with her first major publishers from 1863 to 1876, until they sold the copyrights of her books in 1874 to Chatto and Windus, who served as her main publishers until 1885, and afterwards sporadically up until 1894. From 1885 and onwards, she published her work with approximately twelve different firms, most frequently with T. Fisher Unwin. This chapter will concentrate on Ouida's relationship with her two major publishers and her principal agent James Anderson Rose. Since hardly any letters have survived from Chapman and Hall to Ouida and vice versa, her affiliation with the firm will be examined primarily through her letters to Anderson Rose in order to challenge the recurring opinion concerning their relationship and the 'relay' of Ouida's contract and copyrights. It will become evident, through Ouida's correspondence with Rose and later with Chatto and Windus, that contrary to popular belief, both publishers belonged to the same 'category' of publishers, those directed by an economic incentive. Their business collaboration and personal rapport will be determined mainly through their correspondence, and, secondly, through nineteenth century journals and contemporary

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<sup>4</sup> See Peter Newbolt's *William Tinsley (1831-1902): "Speculative Publisher": A Commentary*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

criticism. The author's vocational trajectory and popularity at the time will also be examined.

Ouida began her career as a published author in the pages of *Bentley's Miscellany*, after her acquaintance with William Harrison Ainsworth<sup>5</sup>. Miss de la Rame was nineteen years of age and lived in Hammersmith, when her neighbour and medical physician, Dr. Francis W. Ainsworth, probably introduced the young writer to his cousin, William Harrison Ainsworth. According to Stewart Marsh Ellis's biography, *William Harrison Ainsworth and his Friends*, Ainsworth, editor and later owner of the magazines *Bentley's Miscellany* (1837-1868) and *The New Monthly Magazine* (1814-1884) was the man who had discovered Ouida: "It is not generally known that Ainsworth 'discovered' Ouida, and that it was under his guidance and editorship that the talented novelist commenced her literary career in the pages of *Bentley's Miscellany*" (Ellis, 1911: 234)<sup>6</sup>. The magazine was founded in 1837 by printer and publisher Richard Bentley and, according to Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor in the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, the magazine's proprietor sought to publish new work by renowned writers rather than reprinting earlier works, and promised "a feast of wit and humour, rather than a diet of political and personal scraps" (Brake, 2009: 50). It published and serialised Dickens's first works as well as authors such as Washington Irving and Charles Mackay (51). Other prominent authors included George Hogarth, Mrs. Trollope, Mary Howitt, John Stuart and Charles Reade. Bentley sold his magazine to Ainsworth in November 1854 for £1,700, "and its content briefly revived under the new proprietor and experienced editor, becoming somewhat more political and topical [...] while rediscovering its literary distinction,

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<sup>5</sup> See Stewart Marsh Ellis' *William Harrison Ainsworth and his Friends*. London: John Lane, 1911, volume ii, page 234.

<sup>6</sup> William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882) was a novelist, editor (1839-1841) and later proprietor (1854-1868) of the monthly literary magazine *Bentley's Miscellany* (1836-1868). For more information see Sheldon Goldfarb's "Ainsworth, William Harrison (1805-1882)" in *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/view/article/2vera43?docPos=6>

with serials by Ellen (Mrs Henry) Wood and fast stories of military and fashionable life by ‘Ouida’” (51). Ouida’s short stories and novels, up to the 1870’s, were preoccupied with the aristocracy and gentry, the nineteenth century ‘landed’ families, as well as ‘the middling sort’ and ‘the monied’, whereas later in her writing she was mainly concerned with the two categories the interaction between upper and lower classes.

Ouida's first contribution to *Bentley's Miscellany* was in 1859, a short story entitled *Dashwood's Drag; or the Derby and What Came of It* (Ellis, 1911: 234-235). Ainsworth was so satisfied with the story, that before the end of 1860 he had published seventeen tales by the new writer. Even though most of them have not been reprinted, according to Ellis “it was these short stories which brought the young authoress her first fame, and by the end of 1860 she was one of the chief attractions in *Bentley's Miscellany*” (Ellis, 1911: 235). The magazine’s annual Epilogue for 1860, possibly written by the current editor, Ainsworth, serving as a representative of *Bentley's*, states: “We offer not our own opinion, but that of a host of critical commentators, when we say that few periodical writers have suddenly achieved a greater success than the contributor who has chosen the fanciful designation of “OUIDA”; whose sketches of society, both in England and the Continent are as graceful as they are accurate” (*Bentley's Miscellany*, 1860: 651-652)<sup>7</sup>. Ouida published precisely twenty short stories in Bentley’s magazine from 1859 until 1862 before publishing her first three-decker novel in 1863.

Like other magazines and newspapers at that time, in several cases, instead of including the author’s name in an article or story, *Bentley's* simply referred to a previous work for which the author was known in order to indicate their identity. Ouida’s name was always printed in

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<sup>7</sup> “Commentators” either refers to the reviewers and editors of the magazine such as Ainsworth, Dickens and Albert Smith or to comments concerning Ouida’s works with *Bentley's* from 1859 when she began publishing with them. Periodicals that refer to Ouida and her short stories within these two years are the *John Bull and Britannia* and *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*.

*Bentley's*, whereas Wood was referred to as “from the author of [...]” a previous work or there was no reference to the author’s identity whatsoever. When the magazine used “the author of”, the previous work was published by the same magazine, exhibiting a consistency in the relationship of author and magazine as well identifying the work of an author with a certain magazine, thus creating a public identity for both parties. In *The New Monthly Magazine* Wood preserved her anonymity, and became known as “the author of”, after her first work with the magazine was published in 1853. Ouida’s name was not mentioned either, throughout her collaboration with the magazine, and she was referred to as “the author of *Granville De Vigne*”—after it published the complete work in 1863—and later “the author *Granville De Vigne* and *Strathmore*”<sup>8</sup>. This ‘technique’ implied the fact that the author was already famous for another work, therefore a disclosure of the name was deemed unnecessary<sup>9</sup>. However, in other cases, such as that of Wood’s in *Bentley's Miscellany*<sup>10</sup>, several authors and reviewers remained anonymous or used pseudonyms when publishing for journals and magazines<sup>11</sup>. Gilbert and Gubar in an essay included in Domna C. Stanton’s *The Female Autograph* write that “certainly, as we all now recognize, by the mid-nineteenth century the male pseudonym was quite specifically a mask behind which a female writer could hide her disreputable femininity” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1984: 28). Marie Louise de la Ramée in particular not only used ‘Ouida’ as a

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<sup>8</sup> See *The New Monthly Magazine* issues between 1861 and 1865.

<sup>9</sup> However, the reference of Charles Reade’s name was not consistent in *Bentley's*, and either his name was included, his name and “the author of”, or simply “the author of”. See *Bentley's* issues after 1854.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Elliot (*née* Dickinson) also published anonymously in *Bentley's* and later in other journals and magazines with the pseudonym “Florentia”. (Peters, 1990: 65).

<sup>11</sup> Eliza Cook (1812-1889) in the *Metropolitan Magazine* and *New Monthly Magazine*, Dilkie Emilia (1840-1904) in the *WR* (1869-1875), Ella Nora Hepworth Dixon (1857-1932) in Yates’s *World*, Wilde’s *Woman’s World* and Arnold Bennett’s *Woman*, Vernon Lee (1856-1935) and Katharine De Mattos (1851-1939), reviewers for the *Athenaeum* (1828-1921). The *Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929) preserved the policy of anonymity for all contributions until 1912. See Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor’s *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, Gent and London: Academia Press and British Library, 2009.

pseudonym but also, perhaps deliberately, ignored the fact that she was also presumed a male writer. Catherine Judd that Charlotte Brontë in particular did not use a male pseudonym because she “was concerned with not finding a publisher, rather, she was worried that her work would be labelled as ‘feminine’ and thus dismissed” (Judd, 1995: 253). It will become apparent that Ouida fits within this category of women who merely wished to distance themselves from ‘feminine’ domestic fiction. Apart from Ouida, the most distinguished Victorian writers who took on pseudonyms to mask their identity or gender were, amongst others: George Eliot (*pseud.* Mary Ann Evans) and Emily, Charlotte and Anne Brontë, who in the beginning of their writing career published under the male names Ellis, Currer and Acton Bell, as well as Lucas Malet (Mary Harrison Kingsley, 1852-1931), Vernon Lee (Violet Paget, 1856–1935), Marie Corelli (Mary Mackay, 1855–1924) and Mona Alison Caird (1854–1932), who wrote for a few years under the pen name G. Noel Hatton<sup>12</sup>.

*The New Monthly Magazine* and *Bentley's Miscellany* were the greatest of rivals in the ‘30s and ‘40s but not during Ainsworth's concurrent ownership which lasted almost 20 years (Brake, 2009: 50). Unlike *Bentley's*, *The New Monthly*, founded and first owned by publisher Henry Colburn, seemed to be occupied by articles of both literary and political nature often giving more emphasis to one of these subjects throughout its lifetime (443-444)<sup>13</sup>. So, as in the case of *Bentley's*, this phase of editorial precariousness ended with W.H. Ainsworth's purchase and editorship of the *The New Monthly*) and the author's ownership of two major magazines did

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<sup>12</sup> This paragraph has been taken from an article I have written entitled “Marginalised Women in Fiction and in Fact: Female Characters in the Victorian Era” and published in *Women Past and Present: Biographic and Multidisciplinary Studies*, Ed. Maria Zina Gonçalves de Abreu and Steve. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014. All names and dates are taken from the *ODNB*.

<sup>13</sup> According to Brake and Demoor Colburn “was successfully exploiting the *New Monthly Magazine* to puff his own authors and titles” and “the practice was attacked by Macaulay in the April 1830 *Edinburgh Review*”. Contributors included William Hazlit, Leigh Hunt, Eliza Lynn Linton, William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Carlyle, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, John Foster, and Benjamin Disraeli (Brake, 2009: 50, 444).

not seem to be viewed as conflicting or problematic (Brake, 2009: 444). Acquiring fame rapidly, Ouida published her first long novel in serial form, *Granville de Vigne, a Tale of the Day*<sup>14</sup>, in *The New Monthly Magazine*, from January 1861 until June 1863, once again thanks to Ainsworth who was the magazine's owner and editor at the time<sup>15</sup>. The *New Monthly*—first owned by an established publisher—along with the *Metropolitan Magazine* (1831-50) was one of the most expensive monthly magazines when serial publications began to appear regularly, priced at 3s 6d per issue, attesting the magazine's status as well as Ainsworth's confidence in Ouida's works (Law, 2000: 16-17). Deborah Wynne in *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* argues that numerous women writers were exploited by Ainsworth including Ouida and Wood who were paid small amounts for their serialisations; he refused to publish their novels in order to avoid standard rate and therefore “they threatened to publish their short stories elsewhere if he did not serialise their novels” (Wynne, 2001: 36). Ainsworth might have been intimidated by the possibility of the two women becoming more popular if they proceed with the serialisation of novels instead of short stories, eventually transferring to publishing houses and publishing three-decker novels<sup>16</sup>. Wood willingly remained unpaid for eight years for her contributions to the *New Monthly Magazine* and Ainsworth “unwilling to take the risk [...] only yielded when Mrs Wood at length refused to write any more short stories for his magazines” (63, 36). However, the fact that he accepted the publication of Ouida's first serial novel, only two years after she had begun

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<sup>14</sup> The *ODNB* mistakenly cites the novel as serialised by *Bentley's* magazine in 1863.

<sup>15</sup> Ainsworth bought *The New Monthly* in 1845 and sold it to Chapman and Hall in 1870. See Stewart Marsh Ellis' *William Harrison Ainsworth and his Friends*. London: John Lane, 1911, volume II: p. 112, 267 and Eds. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor's *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland, Gent and London*: Academia Press and British Library, 2009, p. 444. He also bought *Bentley's* in 1854 and was the owner until its last issue in 1868. See Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor's *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland, Gent and London*: Academia Press and British Library, 2009: 51.

<sup>16</sup> After *Granville de Vigne* two more serialised novels by Ouida were published in *The New Monthly*: *Strathmore* (1863-1865) and *Idalia* (1865-7), before she permanently moved from serialisation in magazines to the three decker volume.

publishing in *Bentley's*, whereas he initially refused to publish Wood's *East Lynne*, exhibits a fair amount of confidence in her work since she was clearly less experienced than the latter.

After *Granville de Vigne's* magazine publication was concluded, the firm Tinsley Brothers published it in a three-decker volume, under a new title: *Held in Bondage*, preserving its former name as the subtitle. According to Graham Pollard in his chapter "Serial Fiction" it seems that during the whole of the Victorian period, a substantial bulk of novels, before being published in three-decker volumes, had formerly appeared in monthly or weekly magazines in the form of instalments (Pollard, 1934: 271y–7). According to Brake and Demoor volume publication was considered a risk by publishers due to its high expenditure whereas "[...] serialised fiction is far more economically sensitive to reader response, as the purchase of a poorly written serial can be dropped by readers part way through in a way that volume publication cannot" and "[...] publishers were able to spread the cost of production, and readers the purchase price, painlessly over the period of issue, while either side could withdraw from publication that proved unpopular" (Brake, 2009: 32, 567). Therefore, Ouida's ardent circumvention of serialisation for almost a decade thereafter denotes that she was a 'risk' worth taking by publishers who circulated her novels in the form most revered, and costly to all: the three-decker. Ouida received £50 by the Tinsley Brothers for *Held in Bondage*, a "typical copyright value" for authors who enjoyed critical and popular success according to Mumm's chart of the literary income of Victorian writers in *Writing for their Lives: Woman Applicants to the Royal Literary Fund, 1840-1880*, whose research is based on the archives of the Fund (Mumm, 1990: 46, 35). Evidence from the archives of the Fund indicates that the assumption of £100 as the normal price of copyright in the mid-nineteenth century is erroneous, at least in the case of women authors. A great many authors, some of whom enjoyed both critical and popular



success, found £50 to be a much more typical copyright value. Indeed, in the sample provided by the women applicants to the RLF, the median value of a copyright was only £30. Hawkins and Ives write that Louisa May Alcott had to forfeit the copyright of *Moods* (1865) and accept the payment of 0,10 cents per copy sold in order to publish her novel (Hawkins and Ives, 2012: 82)<sup>17</sup>. Alcott responded to this with humour and sarcasm in a letter to a friend: “Did I tell you he had paid me my \$25! As *Paradise Lost* went for £10 I ought to be satisfied with £5 for my great work. Oh, the vanity of authors!” (84).

These low figures seemed to be common practice regarding the payment of female writers. Rhoda Broughton also wrote to a friend: “I saw Anthony Trollope’s table of his earnings in his memoirs, it gave me anything but an agreeable sensation, for his worst book was better paid than my best [...] Mr Payn, you know, speaks in the same large way of what he gets. I can’t for my part understand why he should get two or three times as much as I do—but I suppose simply it is because the public like him better” (Colby, 1966: 158). Again, like Alcott, there is a hint of sarcasm in Broughton words. In another case, R.C. Terry argues about Helen Mathers’s wrote *Comin’ Thro the Rye* (1875):

[...] Bentley had made a standard payment of £200. After sixteen editions by 1898 it had realised some £3000 for the publisher. The authoress thought it only fair that some kind of bonus was due to her, so she asked for financial help towards her son’s university education. Richard Bentley answered sternly, ‘if I sold a horse or a picture tomorrow for an agreed amount I should never receive another penny even if it won the Derby or was discovered to be an Old Master.’ Unanswerable logic. Yet it underlines the plight of the novelists, particularly women, at this time. (Terry, 1983: 30)

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<sup>17</sup> In order to earn £50, for example, 500 copies of her novel should be sold. This is a highly unlikely figure since many readers could not afford a copy and thus preferred a circulating library.

Therefore, men seemed to have been in a more advantageous position within the publishing industry, and the sum of £50, which Ouida was paid by Tinsley, was on the whole a modest and standard figure of payment for women writers in the mid to late-nineteenth century.

Tinsley Brothers was founded in 1854 by brothers William and Edward Tinsley and went bankrupt in 1887. The house published works by many popular writers such as William Harrison Ainsworth, Thomas Hardy, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, George Meredith and Anthony Trollope. Before publishing Ouida's first novel a dispute had risen between the two brothers. Apparently, unlike Chapman and Hall's and Chatto and Windus's employment of readers (editors), the Tinsley Brothers read the works they were considering for publication themselves. Edward did not approve of a certain excerpt in the novel where a man saves a dog from drowning, and demanded a reversal of roles. Ouida, however, would have it no other way. William Tinsley openly suggests that his brother was biased against Ouida: "No doubt, some of my brother Edward's feeling against Ouida's work was increased because he was a great friend and admirer of G.A. Lawrence, of whose 'Guy Livingstone' he was of opinion Ouida's earliest work was but a poor imitation" (Tinsley, 1900: 83-84). Edward never acknowledged "the folly of his interference about the dog, nor his worse than folly in refusing Ouida's second novel" (83). His resentment towards Ouida became even more evident when William had purchased *Strathmore* (1865), her second novel, and was subsequently forced to break the contract in order to elude a second disagreement with Edward. In any case, the sum of £50 which Ouida received for the book rights of *Held in Bondage* must have been a very satisfying amount for Ouida, according to William Tinsley's comments regarding the novel: "I have very little hesitation in saying that, had we chosen to have driven a hard bargain with the young authoress, we could

have had the copyright of the book included for the sum we paid her for the three-volume right (O'Connor 1914: 427 and Tinsley, 1900: 82)<sup>18</sup>.

It is with Tinsley that we gain our first insight into Ouida's relationship to Chapman and Hall. According to Peter Newbolt's biographical note in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Hardy himself admitted to William Tinsley's perspicacity regarding young writers, while Tinsley had an intuitive sentiment for Thomas Hardy's fiction as well, which was rejected by more established publishers<sup>19</sup>. Indeed, regarding Ouida, in his autobiography, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher*, William Tinsley, unlike his brother and Chapman and Hall, openly acknowledges the authoress's writing abilities and Tinsley Brothers' erroneous decision to refuse undertaking the publication of Ouida's second novel:

Mr. Frederick Chapman had not at the time much belief in Ouida's works; but he found out later on that there was plenty of money to be made out of the little lady's novels, although he very unwillingly consented to publish her second book. I was very certain in my own mind at the time — or, at least, as certain as any publisher can be in such uncertain matters — that Ouida would make a name as a novelist; and, in the absence of my brother, I purchased her second novel for the same sum and on the same terms as we had published "Held in Bondage." My action in the matter led to a rather disagreeable dispute between my brother and myself, and rather than have a book in our list which might cause unpleasantness between us, I asked Mr. Marsh<sup>20</sup>, Ouida's agent, to let me off my bargain (Tinsley, 1900:82-83).

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<sup>18</sup> Obtaining the copyright of a book included the three-volume right and every other form of publication unless agreed otherwise. "The rights of the *copyright* owner of a book were limited to the rights to print, reprint, publish, and vend, that is, to print it for the market", see Lyman Ray Patterson and Stanley W. Lindberg's *The Nature of Copyright: A Law of Users' Rights*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991, page 147.

<sup>19</sup> See Peter Newbolt's "Tinsley, William (1831–1902)", in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/view/article/36524?docPos=2>.

<sup>20</sup> William Tinsley identifies in his letters "a Mr. Marsh" as Ouida's agent. He notes that Mr. Marsh was one of the major managers of Chapman and Hall at that time, before Ouida transferred to the latter's firm (Tinsley, 1900: 82-83). It is quite probable that, through Marsh, Ouida met Frederic Chapman. It is also likely that Ainsworth introduced her to the new firm since Chapman and Hall published *Bentley's Miscellany* for him (Ellis 1911: 258). William Tinsley and critics Peter Newbolt, Elizabeth Lee and Eileen Bigland all mention Ouida's agent as "Mr. Marsh", without referring to his first name. Despite all this information I have not been able to find any biographical references to 'Mr. Marsh' in any criticism or nineteenth century British periodicals.

Personal sentiments were precisely what differentiated publishers such as Tinsley from firms such as Chapman & Hall and Chatto & Windus. As R.C Terry states in his work *Victorian Popular Fiction 1860-1880* “The Tinsley Brothers may not have been the soundest of businessmen but they are a good example of the thrust of the new commercial publishing in which hunches were played, risks taken and deals with authors set in ways that shocked the older men” (Terry, 1983: 29). Therefore, the popularity of Ouida’s short stories and new novel were not enough for the Tinsley brothers who seemed to be driven by instinct and intuition rather than financial motives.

As will be seen further on, over the past centuries there is scarcely any published information or significant correspondence between Chapman & Hall and Ouida revealing their relationship. Therefore it has been concluded that their collaboration was a pleasant one especially due to a frequently published letter she wrote to Chatto and Windus circa 1878 concerning her refusal to move to their firm in 1874: “I refused your advantageous offer solely from a sense of loyalty to Chapman and Hall and unwillingness to leave an old and friendly firm for a new and untried” (Appendix, It. 7)<sup>21</sup>. It will become clear through the examination of Ouida’s correspondence with her agent and later with Chatto and Windus that both Chapman & Hall and Chatto & Windus belonged to the same class trajectory of publishers, unlike Tinsley Brothers. Chapman and Hall were “the older men”, while Chatto and Windus were merely a fresher ‘edition’ of commercial publishers.

### **Ouida, Anderson Rose and Chapman and Hall**

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<sup>21</sup> All of the letters included in the Appendix are my transcriptions of the correspondence held in the The Berg Collection of English and American Literature in The New York Public Library.

From 1874, when the firm purchased Ouida's novels, up until 1877, James Anderson Rose, her solicitor, and Frederic Chapman were the people with whom Chatto and Windus mostly corresponded concerning Ouida's affairs. No biographical information is given by Nieman about Ouida's agent and surprisingly, there is none found in any books or articles about Ouida. When mentioned in conjunction with Ouida, in most cases, the lawyer is referred to as Anderson Rose rather than James Anderson Rose. Additionally, in *Victorian Publishing* and "From Three-Deckers to Film Rights: A Turn in British Publishing Strategies, 1870-1930" by Alexis Weedon, the agent's name is misspelled, using Ambrose instead of Anderson: "The deal was not her choice and she only reluctantly negotiated through her agent Ambrose Rose" (Weedon, 2003: 149). Roger W. Peattie in his work *Selected letters of William Michael Rossetti* cites James Anderson Rose as a solicitor and collector<sup>22</sup> as well as the lawyer of William Michael Rossetti<sup>23</sup> and distinguished painter James Abbott McNeil Whistler. Peattie's makes no reference to Ouida as Anderson's client. However, the only source that I have acquired which identifies Ouida's agent as the lawyer of W.M. Rossetti and Whistler is Odette Bornand's work *The Diary of W.M. Rossetti 1870-1873*. Rossetti's diary provides a glimpse of Rose's view of Ouida: "Rose tells me that Mrs de la Ramée is one of his clients: fast and very extravagant, running up great accounts at hotels etc, and leaving them unpaid. He likes her, however, and thinks her very clever<sup>24</sup>. Lent me her new novel to read: I have not yet read anything of hers, but fancy her

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<sup>22</sup> James Anderson Rose collected paintings. He owned several drawings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. See Roger W. Peattie's *Selected letters of William Michael Rossetti*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990, p. 130.

<sup>23</sup> William Michael Rossetti was an *art critic and literary editor*. He was also Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti's brother. For more information see: Thirlwell, Angela. "Rossetti, William Michael (1829–1919)". In *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004.  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/view/article/35841?docPos=5>

<sup>24</sup> By 'fast' Rose possibly means that Ouida was a spendthrift, fiscally reckless.

reputation for genuine talent of a certain class is well deserved” (Bornand, 1977: 251). Although Ouida had just begun her career as a novelist, Rossetti’s comments evince not only the popularity of her works but also the ‘gossip’ concerning her talent.

Edward Chapman and William Hall established themselves as publishers in the 1830’s when they set up their own firm Chapman and Hall. They are mostly famous for publishing Charles Dickens’s works but they published other famous Victorian novelists such as Ouida, George Meredith<sup>25</sup>, Anthony Trollope, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell and Thomas Carlyle. According to John Sutherland in *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction* they also contributed greatly to the Dickensian experiment in part-issue serialisation as well as introducing colour printing in England in the late 1830s (Sutherland, 1990: 116). Chapman and Hall was the firm that first published Mary Howitt’s translation of Hans Christian Andersen in 1846 and pioneered in children’s books in addition to bringing out the first annuals for young people in the same decade (116). In the 1840’s they initiated cheap reprints in the British market, publishing collective reissues of the fiction by Bulwer-Lytton, Ainsworth and Dickens, and in the 1850s and 1860s they were pioneers of the yellowback fiction reprint industry (116)<sup>26</sup>. Vital changes occurred to the publishing house in the 1860s when “Frederic Chapman (1823-95) took over from his cousin Edward as head of the business in 1864. The young Chapman brought a sporty and up-to-date

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<sup>25</sup> As will be seen further on Meredith also served as Chapman and Hall’s literary adviser for several years.

<sup>26</sup> Cheap reprints during the 1840s cost approximately 6 to 8 shillings (~30-40 pence), whereas the price of a complete novel (two or three volumes) amounted to 31 shillings. ‘Yellowbacks’ between the ‘50s and ‘60s were sold for two shillings. Yellowback novels were “cheap and flashy volumes mass-marketed for the general public” as well as reprints of popular novels. See Philip Davis’s *The Oxford English Literary History: Volume 8: 1830-1880: The Victorians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.206 and Steve Farmer’s chapter ‘A Note on the Text’ in Wilkie Collin’s *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* by Broadview Press, 1997, p.23 and Jennifer Hayward’s *Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Serial Fictions from Dickens to Soap Opera*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997, p.198.

look to the firm's list with writers like Edmund Yates, Whyte-Melville, Ouida and Hawley Smart" (116)<sup>27</sup>. Sutherland claims that after Frederic's death in 1895 and only after the start of the twentieth century did the house come across economic problems which led to its sale in 1938 to Methuen (116).

As will be seen clearly in the examination of Ouida's novels they were often viewed by reviewers and other writers as inappropriate for the public, especially young women, and apparently Edward Tinsley was not the only publisher and adviser who deemed her writing indecorous. Chapman and Hall's biographer, Arthur Waugh, in his *A Hundred Years of Publishing: Being the Story of Chapman & Hall* (1930), claims that: "No doubt there was a certain prudishness over the firm's [Chapman and Hall] choice of books in those days, but it was a prudishness built upon a deliberate policy. The firm was not anxious to shock, and at the same time it declined to be dragooned" (Waugh, 1930: 146). The firm's moralistic choices of literature were reinforced by George Meredith, Chapman and Hall's main literary adviser, who ardently disapproved one of Ouida's works, apparently because of her laxity concerning ethics (Waugh 1930: 146). Meredith also declined Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* and George Bernard Shaw's *Immaturity*, "which indeed went begging all over town. But both these authors confessed that Meredith's verdict was in accord with the taste of the time" (128). Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) was another refusal of Meredith's, who considered the novel "foul" and "the worst style of present taste". Again the novel became very popular under Bentley's publication. According to Waugh, Edward Chapman was "a man of the most scrupulous morality", while the publisher's elder daughter Mrs. Gaye had said that her father "considered the tone of the book was not good!

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<sup>27</sup> What these writers have in common with Ouida is that they published 'society' novels, novels concerning military life and sports such as racing and hunting.

for the general public” (146). Therefore, Ouida’s often unsavoury plots might have eventually been one of the secondary reasons the firm decided to sell her copyrights to Chatto and Windus.

The issues of immorality and promiscuity in her texts were at the forefront of her publishing problems during her writing career although it is mainly believed that her personal and financial eccentricities injured her reputation and led to her transfers from one publisher to another. However, it seems that initially, Chapman and Hall, seeing Ouida’s rapid success, decided to compromise their ethical image and disregarded George Meredith by signing Ouida with their firm. Waugh writes: “Ouida, in particular, was a gold mine to the firm. It seems strange now to remember that fifty years ago she was considered a highly improper writer, whose books were at once confiscated from the studies of schoolboys, and read surreptitiously by young ladies” (128). Apparently, economic profits came first in Chapman and Hall’s business hierarchy, as will be evident through the firm’s dealings with Ouida and other writers.

Amongst other reasons, Ouida earned epithets such as ‘eccentric’ and ‘erratic’ mostly through her lifestyle as well as certain incidents in her relationship with her publishers, which have often been taken as evidence of these traits. One example is when, after the publication of *Moths*, Ouida began publishing several short stories in prominent journals and magazines. Unlike the three volume novels, she would almost always send her short stories (which were usually quite lengthy, giving another reason for C&W to complain) before the date agreed upon. Thus, Ouida’s inconsistency concerning her novels could be explained by the fact that, while with Chatto and Windus, she wrote approximately one three-volume novel per year in addition to one or two short stories, which was not the case for many mid-nineteenth century female writers.

Another example of Ouida’s supposed ‘tendency to annoy’ is given by Chapman’s biographer:



(She) was a quarrelsome author to publish for; and in later years grew very suspicious of everyone with whom she did business. There is an authentic story of her sending a MS. to a typewriter, with every page mis-numbered. The typescript was to correspond, page for page; and, when she had it all, she would fit it together in a consecutive whole. In the meanwhile she believed that she had defeated the probable plot of the typewriter to steal her story before it could get to the public! (128).

However, such incidents, while creating a reputation for eccentricity, were not entirely justified responses to the economic context in which she wrote. Ouida's fears were other than groundless or imaginary. Clare Pettit in *Patent Inventions: Intellectual and the Victorian Novel* claims that "British copyright legislation was powerless when confronted by the 'piracy' of British texts in North America and more widely" (Pettit, 2004: 281). Indeed, there were no British laws protecting British authors's rights against piracy, especially overseas, and plagiarism, due to literary industrialism, became a common phenomenon. Ouida's concern with these matters haunted her even towards the end of her life, exacerbating her reputation all the more. In her penultimate work before her death *Critical Studies* (1900) she writes:

In the course of a literary or artistic life, or any other life from which the blessing of privacy has been lost, there are many wrongs met with which are real and great wrongs, yet which must be endured because they cannot be remedied by law suits, and there is no other kind of tribunal open; nothing analogous, for instance, to the German Courts of Honour in military matters. There is, for example, a habit amongst some editors of seeking the expression of opinion, on some political or public question, of some well-known writer; printing this expression of opinion, and, before it is published, showing the proof to some other writer, so that an article of contrary views and opinions may be written in readiness for the following number. Now this seems to me an absolutely disloyal betrayal of trust. In the first place, the proof of an article is of necessity entirely dependent on the good faith of the editor. It is an understood thing, a tacit, unwritten law, that no one except the editor is to see it until the public does so. It is never considered necessary to stipulate this to show it to a third person to obtain a refutation, or - a burlesque, of it before the article is published, seems to me a distinctly incorrect thing to do; an extremely unfair thing to do. Yet it is becoming a common practice; and a writer has no redress against it. (Ouida, 1900: 189,190)

Ouida show here her mistrust in editors who in some cases shared manuscripts or proofs with others, often leading to plagiarism, imitation, parody or illegal edition of a certain work. Another

reason for Ouida's frustration and caution were illegal foreign reprints of British novels which were shipped back into the UK, damaging sales of the three-decker novel. James Barnes mentions in *Authors, Publishers and Politicians: The Quest for an Anglo-American Copyright Agreement 1815-1854* that the triple-decker in London would cost 14 to 20s whereas the reprint cost 3s and 2d in the 1840's (Barnes, 1974: 101). Plagiarism and piracy were not at the vanguard of British publishing laws as Ouida hoped for and although little has been written addressing these issues in the mid- and late-nineteenth century and in later criticism, it seems as if it was during this time that the "invention" of plagiarism perhaps even came about<sup>28</sup>.

Ouida began sharing her concerns regarding piracy early in her writing career. She had written three articles with reference to international copyright and three articles on the subject of dramatic thefts to the editor of *The Times*. In 1876 Ouida wrote:

Sir, —Your dramatic critic assumes quite rightly that the production of the "original" drama *Ethel's Revenge*, founded on my novel of "Strathmore," was neither permitted by nor known to me. I received the first intelligence of it in the columns of *The Times*. Whatever form of redress the unhappily imperfect state of the copyright laws may accord I shall endeavor to take. I have at all times refused permission to dramatise my works, considering as I do that in the present state of the English stage a novel must be alike caricatured in its characters and vulgarised in its incidents by any theatrical representation of it. I protest against this travesty of "Strathmore" as the grossest and most injurious form of plagiarism, and shall be deeply indebted if you will give this expression of my opinion publicity in your pages (Ouida, 1876: 8)

Ouida often protested against the dramatisation of her novels which she considered an unauthorised act since it was her mental property. Ouida sent several letters to the editors of *The Times* throughout her career, concerning dramatisations of her works. Therefore, what was considered the whim of a literary 'hypochondriac' by some, in the beginning of her career, would stain Ouida's name and eventually Chapman and Hall's transactions with Chatto and

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<sup>28</sup> See Marilyn Randall's discussion of plagiarism in *Pragmatic Plagiarism: Authorship, Profit, and Power*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001: 80-125.

Windus would be attributed to her 'quarrelsome' nature and not the already established opinion of Frederic as a trustworthy publisher.

However, Ouida's letters to Rose offer more evidence of the commercial concerns lying behind what critics and biographers have taken as proof of her eccentricity. This correspondence, which has never been published save for brief excerpts, discloses Chapman and Hall's lack of consistency as a publisher and a friend. As seen previously Chapman and Hall was viewed as a reliable and successful publisher; however, most of Ouida's letters to Rose nevertheless come to contradict this image. In a letter to her agent on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1871 the author writes:

Dear Mr Rose

Mr Chapman must be mad, or I don't know what. As you will know, accounts were closed between us up to midsummer and since then I have only had the £25 cheque fortnightly. Save the £126 for "Puck" which he paid after signing the agreements. He makes me (from some date untold) his debtor for £1400!!! I think I should be able to get the money for S and S elsewhere at once (till Lippincott's comes in this month) and if you will send me any legal form by which I can empower you to do the fortnightly cheques for me I will have no more to do with Mr Chapman until I tell him my opinion of him on my return to Town. I believe he cannot withhold the fortnightly cheques on any plea and can be county courted if he does not pay?<sup>29</sup> I am quite ashamed to intrude on you at such a time of sorrow with my affairs and cannot thank you enough for so kindly giving them your attention at the very moment of your mother's loss. I had written this far when your note arrived. What can Mr. Chapman mean? Since the agreements were signed I have only had the £25 a fortnight [?] and £10 (ten pound) he send me last week when I wrote for £60 for S and S. I entirely and unequivocally deny that he has advanced a penny besides the monthly sum due by the agreement. I think I should be able to get you by Thursday or Friday the £50 for just S&S. They will be quiet till then will they not? I enclose Mr. Chapman's letter herein he says they shall have the money; not a bill. So many many thanks for all your assistance. (Appendix, lt. 57)

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<sup>29</sup> One or both initials of S & S could refer to the name 'Sark' which Ouida mentions in the next letter or most possibly to Spottiswoode and Son (Spottiswoode & Co.), a printing house based in London. Joshua Ballinger Lippincott (1813-1886) was an American printer, binder, publisher, bookseller and distributor, and "during the period 1855-85 he used the imprint J.B. Lippincott & Company". See *World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*. Ed. Robert Wedgeworth. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993: 519.

Ouida's unease is apparent here and her alarming letter depicts a publisher that is not reliable or supportive and a writer who is inexperienced and confused as regards to legal issues. Ouida received the letter below while she was writing the previous letter to Rose:

January 2 1871

My dear Miss Rame,

I have seen Mr. Rose this morning and he told me that Sark will sue you unless you pay them something. I have agreed to let you have our note of hand for £100 –. at a short [?] on the condition of your first sending here as much M.S. as you have ready for the printer.<sup>30</sup> Pray do this by return, as you know I cannot act now on my own responsibility. You, now to Leur 31, once in £799. 1. 9 and this £100-. That I have agreed to let you have will be all that you are entitled to draw for the new novel. I would therefore strongly urge you to practise economy and remain away from London for some months to come. I who told Mr. Rose that for some time to come that you should only draw £40.- a month, to which he certainly thought you would agree. I have given Mr. Rose a letter that he has taken to Mr Sark stating that on receipt. Of the M.S., they will receive the money. If you send the M.S. by Rail monthly it will reach us safely.

Yours sincerely Edw. Chapman

Drawings to Leur 31/70	1499. 1. 9
6 <sup>th</sup> ?	
By cheap editions 474 -	
“further s... + 100	
“and further s.... 126	
700	700 –
	£799. 1. 9. (Appendix, lt. 58)

Finally a few days later, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, Ouida writes to Rose again.

Dear Mr Rose

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<sup>30</sup> The novel referred to here is *Folle-Farine* (1871).

I add a line to my letter on reflection I do feel that Mr. Chapman after such unwarrantable statements ought to make me some reparation. If he can say such things to you what may he not say to those who do not know me?!! I think that he ought to give you for S and S a cheque for £90 (as he sent me £10 from the £100 due) and if he do this at once I will then send you for him the first 100 pages of the M.S. All this to be independent of the £25 a fortnight which is due for 1<sup>st</sup> Jan and for which I will sign any authority that you may direct me so that your clerk may always get it for me on each 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. I'm afraid that my other monies won't come in for 2 or 3 weeks; and I do feel Mr. Chapman owes me some amends. With warmest thanks ever yours truly indebted L. de la R. (Appendix, lt. 59)

Chapman and Hall are to a certain extent threatening Ouida that if she does not submit the rest of MS she will have to pay S&S, the printers, for what they have already printed. It was not common policy for writers to pay the printers, since publishers dealt with the economic procedures towards publishing a novel. It does not seem that Ouida delayed the MS; on the contrary, the reason she was at first unwilling to send it to the printers was a result of Chapman's failure to pay the money he owed her from previous arrangements. From the fact that she is willing to pay an amount to S&S to alleviate the situation, it appears as if she has no legal right to sue Chapman or refuse payment; this being another piece of evidence of the non-existent laws for authors and authorship.

Noteworthy incidents revealing Chapman and Hall's inconsistency as publishers can be seen in their affiliation with Charles Dickens with whom the publishers pioneered the illustrated novel in monthly 1s. parts. When one of Dickens' novels did not sell as the publishers hoped for, they reminded the author of a clause they had put in their contract "which would require the author to pay back advances if sales were insufficient" (Sutherland, 1990: 98). Dickens was obviously enraged. After another dispute regarding the low payment he received for *A Christmas Carol* (1844), which sold 6,000 copies on the day of publication, the writer decided to leave the firm and assigned Chapman and Hall's printers, Bradbury and Evans, as his new publishers (Sutherland 1990: 99, 115). Again Chapman and Hall had the right to legally withhold or request

payment from Dickens, however, having profited greatly from their collaboration of his first major work, *The Pickwick Papers*, and later *A Christmas Carol*, the firm still acted solely as businessmen.

### **Secret Transfer and Mystery Unraveled**

Ouida's biographers (Lee, French, Bigland and Stirling), writing only thirty to fifty years after Ouida's death, served as a historical basis for most critics discussing Ouida's oeuvre who likewise have assumed that the split with Chapman and Hall came about due to the firm's alleged financial problems; but in fact, it is more likely that the publishers merely acted as businessmen and proceeded with their economic interest in mind. In 1870, seven years before the sale of Ouida's copyrights to Chatto and Windus, Chapman and Hall made "the most costly deal ever with Dickens, giving £7500 advance for *Edwin Drood*" (Waugh, 1930: 128). The same year he bought all of Dickens's copyrights, while approximately four years after the sale, in 1881, he bought all of Carlyle's copyrights (128). This indicates that Chapman and Hall were indeed financially secure and successful at the time of their transaction with Chatto and Windus. However, Frederic Chapman, with whom Ouida was supposedly close friends, did not seem to inform her of his intent to sell her copyrights. It will be verified from the examination of her correspondence with Rose regarding Chapman and Hall that this likely took place because a large amount was offered to Chapman rather than economic flux in Ouida's professional obligations.

According to Jane Jordan in her chapter "Ouida: How Conceptions of the Popular Reader Contributed to the Making of a Popular Novelist" "if anyone was guilty of sharp practice it was Chapman" (Jordan, 2011: 42). She argues that "while Chatto was undoubtedly a canny

negotiator he was by no means guilty of an ‘elaborate conspiracy to delude and cheat’ his authors” (42). From certain deals between Chatto and Windus and some of their authors, Jordan convincingly claims that Chatto was only interested in gaining a backlist of cheap editions—as will be seen in Ouida's case as well—rather than exploiting the writers and offering them less for serialisation and first editions<sup>31</sup>. Suprisingly enough Jordan is the only critic who discredits Chapman as a publisher and in relation to his affairs with Ouida, provides evidence for her conclusions. I will attempt to do the same by additionally examining Ouida’s unpublished correspondence with Rose in order to identify how her publishers might have sullied her reputation and injured her career through lucrative negotiations and cheap prints.

Nieman writes in her dissertation: “Why Frederic Chapman decided to forgo the further publication of Ouida’s works must remain a mystery. Ouida was misinformed about Chapman’s motivation: his firm flourished long after Ouida was taken over by Chatto & Windus” (Nieman, 1994: x). Nieman does not offer any evidence or cite a source for this conclusion, and likewise critics such as Lee, Ffrench and Bigland, do not discuss the reasons behind Chapman and Hall’s vending of the copyrights of Ouida’s works. Lee and Ffrench do not reflect on any financial problems which might have compelled them to give over the rights of Ouida’s novels; whereas Bigland insinuates that Ouida might have known about the transfer of her contract and novels to Chatto and Windus, and also builds a hypothesis—thus underpinning her reputation as a ‘quarrelsome’ author—that Chapman proceeded with the sale and transfer due to her unprofessional conducts:

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<sup>31</sup> For further reading concerning other authors and their deals with Chatto see Jane Jordan’s “Ouida: How Conceptions of the Popular Reader Contributed to the Making of a Popular Novelist”, in *A Return to the Common Reader: Print Culture and the Novel, 1850-1900*, Ed. Beth Palmer and Adelene Buckland. Surrey: Ashgate Ltd, 2011: 37-54, footnote 28.

[...] insisted that the change came about without her knowledge but, knowing Ouida, one can scarcely credit that statement. The facts are obscure, but certainly there was a bother over *Ariadne* (1877). According to Ouida, she awakened one morning to find two sets of presentation copies of that novel, one set published by *Chapman & Hall* and the other by *Chatto & Windus*, and she promptly sent telegrams and letters to both firms accusing them of all manner of chicanery. The real story was probably very different. Some three years previously Ouida had received a tentative offer from Mr. Chatto and refused it, saying she was perfectly satisfied with Chapman & Hall. This was not strictly true, for she had been most exigent in her demands upon that firm and Mr. Chapman, who had never approved of her, since the beginning of their association, grew immensely irritated by her new technique<sup>32</sup>. Remembering Ouida's passion for intrigue and her hopelessly unbusiness-like methods, it seems most likely that, when Mr. Chapman rightly jibbed at some outrageous request, she wrote to Mr. Chatto cancelling her refusal and practically offering him *Ariadne*. (Bigland, 1950: 121).

Bigland's sources for the above statements are not cited and the reason for Ouida's transfer has remained ambiguous among critics and writers of the twentieth century. The fact that Ouida was not without vanity as an author and was famed for her eccentric lifestyle led to a generic consensus, even during the nineteenth century, that she was demanding and whimsical in her professional relationships.

However, correspondence between Ouida, Mr. Anderson Rose, Mr. Chapman and Mr. Chatto, seem to state otherwise. In a letter sent to Rose, dated on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1874, Ouida contemplated selling Chapman *Chandos*, *Idalia*, *Strathmore* and *Under Two Flags* for £300 each. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1874 in a letter to Rose Ouida accepted Chapman and Hall's offer of £1500 for selling the copyrights of these four novels (possibly five) and states that: "It is a hideous loss but what can I do" (Appendix, lt. 70)<sup>33</sup>. However, at the end of the year Ouida seems to have learnt from a source that Chapman was contemplating whether to sell to Chatto

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<sup>32</sup> Bigland might be referring to the shift in Ouida's writing, from depictions of military life, betrayal and wealth to Italian rural landscapes and peasantry. This shift occurred in the 1870s when Ouida moved to Italy.

<sup>33</sup> I say 'possibly five' since Ouida either sold these four novels for £375 or sold five novels for £300 as mentioned in her letter.



and Windus the copyrights he had not yet legally purchased from her<sup>34</sup>. She wrote to Rose: “I cannot think that Mr Chapman has any right yet to sell to Chatto” (Appendix, lt. 71). Her underlining of “yet” possibly indicates the fact that she had just signed an agreement with Chapman and had not *yet* received payment. Chatto’s purchase of Ouida’s copyrights, all twelve novels, must have taken place sometime in December since on the 31<sup>st</sup> of that month she was aware of the transaction between the two publishers:

As soon as we have arranged for the new novel with C. we will attack him for permitting Chatto and Windus to sell Wooden Shoes. He has no possible right to have added it to their list and in compensation thereof I wish to have the right to repurchase all copyrights whenever I may desire at the same sum with moderate interest according to time elapsed. Mr Chapman really ought to pay me for the great annoyance he entails on me by his delay in arranging for the new novel (Appendix, lt. 74)<sup>35</sup>.

Apart from the fact that Ouida had heard about the collaboration between the two major firms, there is no correspondence either indicating whether she had any knowledge of it or if she objected before the sale of the copyrights to Chatto. This letter indicates that Ouida was not informed about another sale, that of *Two Little Wooden Shoes*, this time sold by Chatto Windus, with Chapman and Hall’s consent, therefore again her ignorance of Chapman’s actions is highly probable. On the same date as her previous letter to Rose she wrote to him again: “The whole £1500 was to have been paid in this year; now expired” (Appendix, lt. 73). Chapman and Hall must have agreed to pay her by the end of the year and failed to do so.

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<sup>34</sup> That is *Held in Bondage* (1863) *Cecil Castlemaine’s Gage* (1867) *Tricotrin* (1869) *Puck* (1870) *Folle-Farine* (1871) *A Dog of Flanders* (1872) *Pascarel* (1874) *Two Little Wooden Shoes* (1874).

<sup>35</sup> *Two Little Wooden Shoes* (1874) was probably sold by Chatto & Windus for dramatisation, a legal right English and American publishers had without being obliged to ask for the writer’s consent. In 1891 the New Copyright Act, by which the copyright of a book could be secured to the English author and publisher if it was printed in America, was being negotiated (Lee 1914: 144). Before 1891 the authors had no legal means to prevent their works from being dramatised in England or America or reprinted in America.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1875 Ouida sent to Rose a copy of a letter she sent to Chapman on the same day concerning her payment for the sale of her copyrights:

I propose that we shall agree as follows:

You to pay me £100 a month for twenty months, beginning 1<sup>st</sup> February 1875 i.e. this coming 1<sup>st</sup> February. I to give you , for this, the use for five years of the forthcoming 3 vol. novel; of another 3 vol. novel in twelve months time; and of a short one volume story; I to retain all rights of translation and reproduction on the continent and in America and the colonies. In fine our old terms of agreement. This is the very least that I can take and in making this reduction I practically fall in with your own terms as nearly as may ask be. And at the present moment owing to the immense increase of my continental reputation I naturally look for high and not lower prices. If you close with this, please tell Mr Rose to whom I send copy of this, and he will kindly draw out a short agreement. Magazines are not to be [?] of for me; and in the case of the now ready novel B. Tauchnitz having already paid me for it and all over [?] translations being waiting for it. Delay in it issue is really serious to me. I was much pained as your parting with the copyrights to a strange publisher and I believe I parted with them to your house alone and I particularly wished the arrangement to have been kept private [...] (Appendix, lt. 76).

It is evident in this letter that Ouida had no knowledge of the firm's sale of her copyrights in advance. Although Ouida was famous of being overprotective and extremely cautious in regards to her works and rights, she certainly did not seem aware of the transfer; first of all, owing to her unwillingness in publishing with Chatto and Windus even after their purchase of several copyrights in 1874; and secondly, on account of her bitter comments in letters and articles concerning her publishers thereafter.

In the first letter sent by the firm to Ouida, dated on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1875, Chatto and Windus seemed eager to persuade the writer to publish her next novel, *Signa* (1876), with them instead of Chapman and Hall by tactfully demonstrating their thriving position in the publishing market:

When we purchased the copyrights of your novels from Mr Chapman last year, he asked us if we would like to publish your new novel<sup>36</sup> and we of course told him that we were most anxious to do so, and under the impression that he would write to you in regard to this we have been since then hoping to receive communication from you.

We have made great efforts to ensure the popularity of your novels by keeping them constantly before the public, and should be very sorry if we did not publish your new one, as we are confident that it is most desirable for authors to have the works in the management of the publisher, and that having your other works we can do much more for a new book by you than any other house<sup>37</sup>.

We learn from Mr Anderson Rose that you are desirous of not changing your publisher but that Mr. Chapman should bring out your new book; and in consequence have spoken to Mr Chapman upon the subject and he says that provided you will consent he is quite willing to transfer to ourselves his agreement with you: our repaying him the expenses he has already incurred. If you will consent we shall be glad to pay you at once in cash the balance of the sum agreed upon, as well as a bonus of £100 extra in the event of selling more than 1500 copies of the 3 vol edition (of which we think there is no doubt) but to carry out in every respect, Mr Chapman's agreement with you.

We are known to many of your friends whose works we publish, amongst whom we may mention Mr Wilkie Collins, Mr Swinburne, Mr G.A. Sala, Miss Braddon, Dr Westland Marston, Mrs Lynn Linton (Nieman, 1994: 2).

This letter is Chatto and Windus's first attempt to sign Ouida as their client and the writer as mentioned declined the offer. Two years later in 1877 Ouida founds out that Chapman actually sold the copyrights twice the price he paid her for them: "I have [?] heard by a curious chance that the copyrights he gave me £1500 for he sold to C and W for £400 and £500 a piece. In all some £4000 or £5000. For Ariadne he received £1000 down" (Appendix, lt. 75). According to Alexis Weedon's article "From Three-Deckers to Film Rights: A Turn in British Publishing

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<sup>36</sup> *Signa* (1875). "Chatto & Windus did not publish the book: on 10 August 1875 Chapman & Hall would offer Chatto & Windus to publish the 'cheap five shilling Edition [...] for the term of our agreement with her — about five years'. Folio in the Chatto & Windus Contract Files: Ouida, henceforward Contract Files" (Nieman, 1994: 1).

<sup>37</sup> Chatto and Windus published all of Ouida's novels, up to 1874, in a one volume edition, at 5 shillings per volume. They began advertising Ouida's novels in the newspaper *The Graphic* (London, England), under "Advertisements & Notices" on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1875, thus "keeping them constantly before the public". In their first advertisement of her novels, Ouida's name is written in bold capitals separate from the other novels advertised by the Chatto and Windus. In 1876 the bold letters were abandoned, *Signa* (1875) and *In A Winter City* (1876) were added to the list and the firm advertised all her one volume novels up to December 1876. The novels were advertised for two whole years approximately once a week (apart from June and July), interchangeably and intermittently in 1876 by *The Examiner* as well.

Strategies, 1870-1930” and Nieman two folios in the Contract Files, dated 1874, Chatto & Windus paid Chapman & Hall £3,219 for the copyrights of eleven novels (Weedon, 1999: 197 and Nieman 1994: 1)<sup>38</sup>. If the amount Weedon claims that Chapman received is accurate it is an acceptable amount since Ouida had received from Chapman £1500 for four novels.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1877 Ouida asked Rose to look into Chapman’s financial affairs possibly in order to verify whether he was in a financial constraint and in his reply Anderson wrote: “Chapman and Hall are undoubtedly financially ‘sound’, but may possibly not be strong in view of the important works they issue involving heavy outlay in cash and slow but good returns” (Philips, 1978: 211)<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, the firm did not seem to be in any serious financial situation at the time of the transfer nor was Ouida an unpopular writer, which could explain a loss of profits. A few months later on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July Ouida decided to confront Chapman in response to the rumours of her transfer to Chatto; again she sent a copy of the letter to Rose:

Dear Mr Chapman

Whilst awaiting your reply relative to Chatto and win [sic] I have chanced to hear from persons of interest the details of your transactions with that Firm regarding my works, the prices received (?) both as regards the older reprints and the recent works, including *Ariadne*. I am sure you know as well as I do that I could have stopped these latter transfers. Three years ago I refused all of C and Windus’ solicitations and offers as did Mr. Rose for me. Their purchase of works of which their copyright remains mine has no legality without my concurrence and consent. In my arrangements with you I hold the publication by your old established and honourable House and part, and a considerable part, of my payment. Three years ago C and W. offered me a “bonus” of £100 in excess [?] on each novel if I would turn over my agreement with you to them; I refused; preferring to remain with your Firm than to obtain the extra money. My books are now given over to them and I have not even this small compensation. Men of business have offered to see C and W for me; But I think it better to write direct to you and hope to have your cooperation if you will

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<sup>38</sup> Two folios dated 1874 in the Contract Files.

<sup>39</sup> This is an unpublished note from Princeton University Library found in Celia G. Phillips’ article “Ouida and her Publishers: 1874-1880”. *Bulletin of Research in Humanities* 87 (1978): 211.

out? For and with me it will be much best for every one. Please do see C and W at once and tell them what I have said. Also that I expect from them as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> The payment by them to me at once of that "bonus" of £100 on each work as offered by them to me previous to the publication of *Signa*. 2<sup>nd</sup> The purchase by them in six months time from me of the copyrights of the four works belonging to me, at £500 each work, £2000 in all. Both you and they will see the justice of this, and I feel you will like better to negotiate it than for me to employ any third person to do so. If necessary I would come to London, but I hope that it will not be so. Please arrange this and answer me in a few days as possible (Appendix, lt. 78).

From the structure and cohesion of this letter it is apparent that Ouida had begun discussing her legal rights upon this matter with her agent, Rose. Indeed, four months later on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December Rose wrote to her:

Dear Miss De la Ramé;

Let me have a copy of your letter to Chatto and Windus and their reply as soon as possible.

With regard to Chapman and Hall's transfer of your novels to Chatto and Windus it appears to me that Chapman has a right to sell what he has bought and no more, to Chatto and Windus and that the extreme cases suggested by you and your friends as to Wych street and Hollywell H. publishers does not apply.

The question is what is the position of Chatto and Windus. I believe at the present time that their position is as good or better than Chapman and certainly they have command of more capital.

It is true that the Old firm published some queer books but these books have been for some time eliminated from their advertisements. Suppose you were to bring an Action and claim damages on the assumption that Chatto and Windus were not respectable publishers! Why they would call dozens perhaps hundreds of respectable witness in the Literary World to swear that they were most respectable Publishers. Indeed I am not at all sure that it would not be for your interest to come to some arrangement direct? For Chatto and Windus to publish for you.

Your case as to Chatto and Windus sending out large quantities of the cheap edition of your novels to America stands on a different footing? And you may have a good case if it be as understands that Chapman's agreement with you was exclusive of the American market and that this was part of the Agreement and has been mentioned in your receipts to Chapman and has been acted upon for years- that up to a very recent date Lippincott paid you a considerable sum (£300 for each novel) for the early sheets- which were sent to Lippincott by Chapman- who knew the arrangement between you and Lippincott and that the American market was reserved.

Under the circumstances if Chatto and Windus have flooded the American market with cheap editions of course Lippincott will make no further arrangement with you.

For instance I understand that your agreement with Chapman as to “Ariadne” was that the cheap edition should not be published till the expiration of the 12months after the full priced edition whereas Chatto and Windus have published the cheap edition within 4 months of the publication of the full priced edition so that your interests would be seriously damages in the diminished sale of the full priced edition and by the refusal of Lippincott to make terms with you if the American market is flooded by the cheap edition of Chatto and Windus.

With regard to your letter of December 22<sup>nd</sup> I have not taken any proceedings against Chatto and Windus and of course therefore I gave them the option of amicable compromise.

I informed them that I was instructed by to take legal proceedings and my object was to get from Chatto and Windus some statement of what they considered their case. They are shrewd sort of people and they very wisely referred me to their solicitors (Appendix, lt. 79).

Therefore, while Chapman and Hall had the right to sell the four novels Ouida had transferred to the firm in 1874, according to Rose he did not have the right to sell the other seven novels. A week later, after a meeting with both publishers Ouida wrote to Rose that Chapman and Chatto were afraid they were going to be sued, damaging thus both firms dreadfully (lt. 79). Ouida received the compensation she had claimed, and in their contract the firms also promised never to serialise any of her works, a promise Chatto eventually disregarded (lt. 79).

In 1880 Ouida wrote to Chatto and Windus that Chapman’s bankruptcy came about due to his wife’s lavishness while in a letter written in 1904 she disclosed to Frederick Macmillan, her last publisher: “Fred Chapman was a pleasant fellow but his passion for sport and society made him dishonest, Chatto and Windus I never liked; he [Chapman] turned the copyrights over to them on their bankruptcy”<sup>40</sup>. Nonetheless, Lee, who mentions that Ouida was old friends with Edward Chapman and William Hall, does not discuss or even refer to the writer’s frustration and disappointment by what she considered a betrayal, which is revealed in her letters to Rose (Lee, 1914: 92). Chapman and Hall’s biographer quotes Anthony Trollope who offered an image of the

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<sup>40</sup> The first letter is from the Berg Collection at the New York Library and the second one belongs to the British Library. Both letters are quoted from Celia G. Phillips’ article “Ouida and her Publishers: 1874-1880”. *Bulletin of Research in Humanities* 87 (1978): 211.

firm before Frederic Chapman took over: “Mr Edward Chapman always acceded to every suggestion made to him. He never refused a book, and never haggled at a price”, which was certainly not the case with his successor (Waugh, 1930: 93). So while twentieth century material regarding Ouida’s relationship with Frederic shows that the writer had a very amiable and professional relationship with the publisher, nineteenth century correspondences shows that the dissolution of their contract was a result of substantial and economic problems as well as potential antipathies.

### **Chatto and Windus’ correspondence with Ouida**

Chatto and Windus’ correspondence with Ouida began in 1877, three years after the firm had purchased from Chapman and Hall the copyrights of four novels. It is quite notable that Andrew Chatto, who started as a minor publisher in James Hotten’s firm, came to purchase it in 1873, after the owner’s death, and which he then named ‘Chatto and Windus’ (Weedon, 2004). In their first years as co-owners of a publishing house, Chatto and poet W.E. Windus managed to acquire famous writers such as Collins, Sala and Braddon who previously published with the Tinsley Brothers. Although Chatto and Windus now owned the copyrights of the novels Ouida had published with Chapman and Hall, the writer, after *Signa*, published one more novel exclusively with Chapman and Hall: *In a Winter City* (1876), before her contract began with her new and exclusive British publisher. *Ariadne* (1877) was a co-publication between the two firms and her last collaboration with Chapman and Hall.

From 1874, when the firm purchased Ouida’s novels, up until 1877, Rose and Frederic Chapman were the people with whom Chatto and Windus mostly corresponded concerning

Ouida's affairs. The first indication of correspondence from Ouida to Chatto and Windus is dated circa November 1877 according to a letter from Rose, although in 1875, prior to this letter, the firm wrote to her, as mentioned previously, with no record of whether she ever responded<sup>41</sup>. The first surviving letter Ouida sent to Chatto and Windus is dated sometime in 1878 according to the Berg Collection, however, it must have been written much earlier since the next dated letter, in which Ouida seems cordial and intimate, was written in December 1877. The undated letter in question therefore must have been her first or one of the first letters sent to the publishers:

Gentlemen

Your letter to Mr Rose has been forwarded to me and as I thereby perceive that you are ignorant of all that I have complained of during the last six months. I deem it only due to you to address you personally myself previous to taking any further slips by the medium of Law. With regard to the United States the matter stands thus: That my sales there, and the prices of my Advance sheets are alike deteriorated and damaged by your repartition of any works there. Hefty sets of each work has been sent by you to the recent Fall Trade Sale, and there sold at nominal prices, not to mention large sales in other ways and importations through Canada.

All American rights being mine this is a grave invasion of them, and productive of most serious and illegitimate damage to my interests present and future. But this is not the only question: You must be well aware that when in 74 I refused your advantageous offer solely from a sense of loyalty to Chapman and Hall and unwillingness to leave an old and friendly firm for a new and untried, I would never have foreseen that you would possess yourselves (against my known wishes) of works placed only for a few years in the hands of C and H. I was therefore deeply annoyed, as well as annoyed when I saw *Wooden Shoes*, *Signa* and *Winter City* placed in your cheap editions. Though Mr Chapman stated you were only acting as his agents and I only learned subsequently you had purchased them. Thus I neither enjoy the pecuniary advantages I might have obtained from you nor retained (Appendix, lt. 7).

It is obvious that Ouida had recently been informed about the transfer and is rather aggressive towards the new publishers and bitter towards the former.

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<sup>41</sup> On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1877 Rose wrote to Ouida: "Let me have a copy of your letter to Chatto and Windus and their reply as soon as possible" (Appendix, lt.79).



The firm's reply to Ouida's letter on the same date as Rose's letter suggests that she finally came to terms with the transfer of the copyrights of her works and commenced a personal collaboration with her new publisher:

We are greatly obliged by the receipt of your letter, which informs us for the first time of the facts of which until now we have been entirely ignorant.

We are most desirous that you should be correctly informed of the conditions on which the copyrights of your works were transferred to us and also that we should obtain your cordial recognition of our endeavours fruitfully and efficiently to represent you as publishers, and as it will be almost impossible to do so by correspondence and it is hardly fair to expect you to come to London on the business, our Mr Chatto hopes shortly after you receive this to have the pleasure of waiting on you in Florence, bringing with him for your perusal all the agreements between Mess Chapman Hall and ourselves (Nieman, 1994: 3).

It is evident that Chatto and Windus were very eager to publish Ouida's novels since they decided to send Andrew Chatto to Florence and meet with Ouida for the signing of the agreement papers, rather than handing the procedure over to her agent Mr Rose, who dealt with Ouida's financial and legal affairs. The first surviving letter from Ouida to Chatto was on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December: "I see in the new Whitehall<sup>42</sup> there is an article on me. They are brought in new attacks on *The World*<sup>43</sup>, so I should be much obliged if you will kindly see Mr Yates<sup>44</sup> as soon as you can and give him the information which he is too manly a man not to notice in the spirit in which it is offered. I have written to editor Whitehall to express my annoyance" (Appendix, lt.

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<sup>42</sup> *Whitehall Review* (1876-1912) was "a 'personal' journal with a special feature in the publication of portraits, principally of ladies well known in the London world". See Wilfrid Meynell's *Journals and Journalism: With a Guide for Literary Beginners*, Field & Tuer, 1880, p. 140.

<sup>43</sup> As in the case of *Whitehall Review*, *The World* was a "Six-penny weekly newspapers founded in the 1870s (that) included gossip pages, interviews, illustrations, and other features designed to provide intimate knowledge of the Victorian celebrities". Easley, Alexis. *Literary Celebrity, Gender, and Victorian Authorship, 1850-1914*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, p.137.

<sup>44</sup> Edmund Hodgson Yates was a Scottish journalist and novelist. He founded *The World* along with another journalist, Grenville Murray (1824–1881). See P. D. Edwards's "Yates, Edmund Hodgson (1831–1894)", in the *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30188>.

2). So, by the end of 1877 it seemed as if Ouida had settled her differences with her publishers cordially.

Ouida had a reputation for being a spendthrift and for sending her MSS and proofs of her works quite later than expected. The first signs of these temperaments are obvious from the beginning of the authoress's working relationship with her publishers. In a letter dated March 1878 Ouida changes without notice previous informal financial agreement:

When we wrote a day or two ago we were under the impression that you would not want to draw upon us for a second £100 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, but on again referring to your letter we see that you wish to do so. If you shall find it necessary to draw upon us at that date, will you please make your draft as 'today's sight' instead of as previously 'at sight', your bankers will discount it all the same but as we shall be rather pressed about the middle of the month with having to provide for other heavy payments — it will give is a little longer time (Nieman, 1994: 4).

Moreover, in another letter, in December of the same year, signed by Andrew Chatto himself, the publisher wrote: "I am pleased to know that you have decided upon publishing your new story"<sup>45</sup> in March" (3). However, in March Ouida had not yet completed her novel and Chatto, instead of asking her directly about the progress of her work since it was already overdue, asked her diplomatically: "When may Mess Spottiswoode's expect the completion of the copy?" (5). A month later on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April they wrote again:

We are getting rather anxious about the progress of 'Friendship' as the London season<sup>46</sup> is so rapidly advancing, and the printers will still have a great deal of work to do in the way of making up the sheets and

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<sup>45</sup> *Friendship* (1878)

<sup>46</sup> In *Our Mothers* Allan Bott and Irene Clephane explicate the 'seasons' of middle and upper-class Victorian London: "For Society, the year was divided rigidly into three sections the London Season, the shooting season, and the hunting season. Except during April, May, June, and July, and a few weeks in late autumn, London was 'empty'" (Bott 1931: 12). These two latter periods were called 'the London Season' and during that time upper and middle classes remained in London. Leonore Davidoff in *The Best Circles; Women and Society in Victorian England* writes: "...the Season comprises courts, levees, state dinners and balls, Royal garden parties, and a few other events of the hardy annual class" (Davidoff, 1973: 65). Therefore, it was wiser to publish during the London season, since many people left the city for the countryside during the shooting and hunting season.

working off. It would expedite matters very much if you could let them have the division for the first two volumes and the corrected proofs for press (5)

Chatto and Windus resorted to cordial negotiations and settlements to meet society's deadlines and similarly a week later Andrew Chatto wrote:

Can you possibly manage to let Spottiswoode have the conclusion of the MS of 'Friendship' immediately? They do not like to divide the third volume until they know about how much more copy you are likely to send them. Mr Lippincott shall have an early set of revised sheets (6)<sup>47</sup>.

When *Friendship* did not receive the attention hoped for, Chatto and Windus indirectly blame Ouida for the late submission of her MS and proofs: "We are sorry that you do not think that 'Friendship' has been well advertised. We have already expended as much on it as on 'Ariadne', bit in consequence of the long time it has been announced we fear that a good deal of this effect has been lost" (7).

Apart from being late in sending her MSS and proofs, Ouida was also known for being demanding when it came to corrections of her works. The proofs would go back and forth between her and the printing houses for two, three months in some cases. Chatto and Windus, having experienced this, before the publication of *Ariadne* (1877) and *Friendship* (1878), gave her fair warning on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1878: "We hope that you will be able to let us have your new novel earlier and that there may be some means of keeping down the printers' charges for corrections, which on your last cost is more than half as much as setting up the whole of the types!" (9). From this letter onwards Chatto and Windus seemed to pressure Ouida in meeting the date agreed upon for the submission of the MS and mentioned the overcharge in corrections

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<sup>47</sup> As evident in Chatto's correspondence to Ouida throughout their collaboration, Lippincott preferred to have a whole volume in hand before commencing on the division of it into three volumes.

in several letters relating to the completion, printing and publication of *Moths*. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1879 they wrote to her:

We hope your new novel is progressing and that we may shortly be favoured with the MS, in order that it may not be hurried in going through the press. It would be a considerable economy to us if you could let us have the whole of the copy at once, as on 'Friendship' the printer's bill for corrections was over £50:0:0 (13).

21<sup>st</sup> of July 1879:

We are greatly concerned at not hearing from you respecting your new novel promised for publication in September, and the MS of which we ought now to have in order that it may be got out by that date. We are depending upon its appearance in September for the return of a portion of the capital invested in it, as our monthly payments are pressing somewhat heavily upon us in these dull times; and we have purposely kept that month clear from the issue of other novels in order that we may put forward all our effort in launching your story (14).

28<sup>th</sup> of July 1879:

We have referred to your last letters, but the only mention we can find in any of the recent ones of your new novel is in your letter of May 9<sup>th</sup>, in which you say we may expect the MS in September, but we wished to impress upon you how much we are depending upon being able to publish it in September (as we agreed with you), in order to give you the benefit of an autumnal season for its first appearance, and with which view we are keeping that month as much as possible clear of other publication, and for which purpose it will be necessary for the whole of the MS to reach us before September (14).

From the repetitiveness in these letters it is obvious that gradually Chatto and Windus became impatient. In the last letter they go as far as to underline crucial words such as "MS" and "publish" which stress Ouida's obligation to them. In August Ouida sent a fragment of the new novel possibly to appease them temporarily but, in letters of this month and the next, (September being the month of the agreed completion of the MS) the firm again complained of the manuscript not reaching the printers on the desirable date.

During the subsequent months the author was ‘penalised’ for the delay of her MS and instead of the monthly payment of £100, her pay is reduced to £50:

As ‘Moths’ is now much behind time and we are feeling rather pushed by having so much ready money locked up, we shall be glad if it will suit your convenience for us to make the interval between our remittances two months instead of one as heretofore (Nieman, 1994: 16).

A month later, in November, Chatto and Windus wrote to Ouida that Spottiswoode & Co. had sent her the corrections for the first half of the MS and that they had also received the last part of her MS and had begun corrections. However, the publishers discretely expressed their disappointment at this delay by informing Ouida that even if the novel was prepared for print in a month they will refrain from publishing it since it was not prudent to publish a new book before Christmas, seeing that people tended to buy Christmas books at that time (16)<sup>48</sup>. Therefore, they stated that it would be published mid-January. Finally, the novel was published towards the end of February due to the fact that Ouida had failed to send the corrections of the second volume to the American publisher, Mr Lippincott. Chatto and Windus could not publish it since British and American publishing companies had agreed upon the term to bring out a new novel simultaneously (17).

Unfortunately, *Moths* was not received well due to its supposedly immoral content and as a result, less than two months after its publication, Chatto and Windus decided to break up the types of the three-decker novel and issue a cheaper, one volume edition (Bigland, 1950: 152 and

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<sup>48</sup> According to critic Lorraine Janzen Kooistra’s in *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture, 1855-1875*: “The principal criterion for a Christmas book was not seasonal content but rather the material features of ornamental binding and wood-engraved illustration. [...] These ornate illustrated works collectively reviewed as ‘Christmas books’ included a wide variety of subjects; their only common feature might be identifies as ‘pictureability’. [...] *Among this heap of books piled high on the booksellers’ tables each Christmas, volumes of illustrated verses predominated*—not because they outweighed the other genres in size of print run or proportion of the market, but because more was at stake in their production and reception” (Kooistra, 2011:2). Thus, while the ‘Christmas book’ was in high demand at the end of each year in nineteenth-century Victorian England, an imminent publication before the festive period would be injurious to sales.

Weedon, 2003: 151). Critic Richard Daniel Altick in his book *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* argues that “[...] as a rule, so long as the demand for the original edition continued at the libraries and the booksellers; a reprint was out of the question; and even a book was no longer called for at the library, reprinting was delayed until the unwanted copies found buyers in the secondhand market” (Altick, 1998: 289). Altick also estimates here that only after a year or two would publishing houses proceed with a cheap reprint (289). Therefore, Chatto and Windus, apart from being strict businessmen and apprehensive as to whether sales would drop even more—due to *Moths*’ negative reviews—, were also somewhat hasty since there were only three reviews of *Moths* before they issued a cheap edition, indicating that they could not have obtained an objective view of the critical response to the novel in such a short period of time.

Two factors seemed to have led Chatto and Windus to such a decision: Edward Mudie and two reviews of the novel. *Moths*’s impropriety was condemned by Mudie who threatened to withdraw it from circulation, which urged Chatto to hastily break up the type (Finkelstein, 2004)<sup>49</sup>. When Chatto and Wiindus decided upon the latter, Ouida accused their literary adviser and popular novelist, James Payn: “I am sorry Mr. Payn is your literary advisor<sup>50</sup>; I trust you never speak with him of my works for so commonplace a writer as he is can be no judge of such works as mine. A man who like him can see no genius in Sir Walter Scott can be no fit judge of

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<sup>49</sup> David Finkelstein in his biographical note: ‘Mudie, Charles Edward (1818–1890)’, in the *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004, writes: “The rise of the three-volume novel as a standard publishing format in the nineteenth century had begun before Mudie’s development of his business. But Mudie, in offering unlimited borrowing of fiction and prose works at low subscription rates starting at 1 guinea a year, became a major supplier of reading material for a wide audience unable to afford the cost of new books”. Therefore, he was a highly influential figure in the book trade.

<sup>50</sup> In his reply to this letter on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September Chatto wrote: “Your informant is mistaken in supposing that Mr. Payn is our literary adviser. It is Messrs Smith & Elder to whom he fills that position” in M.J. Nieman’s Master’s Dissertation “Recasting A Victorian Woman Writer: Chatto and Windus’ Letters to Ouida” held at The University of Reading, 1994, p.23.

any genius” (Appendix, lt. 11). So, unlike the Tinsley Brothers, who seemed to read a book themselves before publishing it, and whose personal sentiments determined their decisions, Chatto and Windus relied on a circulating library and a reader’s suggestions (as in the case Chapman and Hall and George Meredith) inevitably distancing themselves from the author.

These articles are mentioned in Chatto’s letter to Ouida on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1880, whereas the praising review of the novel in the *Athenaeum*, published on the same month as that of *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*<sup>51</sup>, is not referred to in this letter (Nieman, 1994: 21). A month earlier and only two months after *Moths*’ publication, Chatto wrote to Ouida about three of her novels that had depressed her sales: *In A Winter City* (1876) (the last book she published with Chapman and Hall), *Friendship* (1878) and *Moths* (1880) and, as will be seen in another chapter, the firm entreated her to return to previous subtle plots in her next novel urging her hence to alter her subject matter. *Moths*, in particular, caused quite a stir, since it openly criticised upper class society for its vulgarity. In the same letter Chatto asked Ouida to return to models such as those given in *The Dog of Flanders* or *Ariadne* (18). One cannot but wonder why Chatto and Windus allowed the novel to be published since its context was so unethical that even Mudie<sup>52</sup> threatened to remove it from his circulating library after it received negative reviews; and this again implies either that the publishers or their readers did not read the novel before its publication—which may also indicate their confidence in Ouida’s work—or that they merely changed their view concerning the novel after Mudie’s and the reviewers’ censure.

Concerning Chatto and Windus’ commercial ingenuity Weedon argues that they “found

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<sup>51</sup> See “Moths”, *SR* 49:1,270 (Feb.1880): 287-288 and “Novels of the Week”. *The Athenaeum* 2728 (Feb.1880): 181-183.

<sup>52</sup> See Eileen Bigland's. *Ouida, the Passionate Victorian*. London, New York: Jarrolds, 1950, page 152 and Alexis Weedon's *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916* Aldershot: Ashgate. 2003, page 151.

innovative ways to utilize the economies of mass production and make the most of their investment in copyrights and to capture transient popular tastes. The firm's practices reveal an awareness of the ups and downs in the commercial value of novels, and an experimentation with strategies for refreshing market interest" (Weedon, 2003: 142). Although it seems that Chatto and Windus's objections to *Moths* were merely on grounds of taste—and commercial imperatives and taste were always concomitant—, in the case of *Moths* evidence states otherwise. The fact that the firm broke up the type only after Mudie's threat of banning the novel from his library is symptomatic of the publisher's fear of losing money. Hence, *Moths*'s disturbing and realistically inappropriate plot damaged Chatto and Windus's sales rather than the image of their moral integrity.

After *Moths*, certain actions taken by Chatto and Windus concerning Ouida's late submissions, and at times demanding requests, later seem to have turned into policies, such as the introduction of a £50 reduction on every occasion Ouida delayed submissions of her MS to the printers<sup>53</sup>. In Ouida's next book, *Wanda* (1883) the publishers were vexed once again due to the author's delayed completion of her MS and proofs. In September 1882 Chatto and Windus send a letter to Ouida saying that they expected her MS that month and in October they sent two letters stating again that it was to be delivered in September. In the last letter Chatto and Windus seem unresponsive and considered their reduction of Ouida's payment from £100 to £50 self-explanatory since she had not sent the whole MS to the printers:

We are sorry that as you have already made your arrangements in anticipation of our monthly remittance being for 100£, the reduction of it to 50£ would inconvenience you; although we imagined that our letter to you last month reminding you that the complete MS of your new novel was then due, would have been sufficient notice that as on a previous occasion it would be necessary to restrict our remittances to 50£ a month (Nieman, 1994: 46).

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<sup>53</sup> See Nieman's letters after 1881.



The complete MS was finally sent five months later and Ouida again delayed the delivery of her proofs, which dissatisfied the firm even more since they resorted to reminding her twice in one month. Chatto and Windus dependence upon Edward Mudie is evident once again when in the latter letter he writes: “We are very anxious to receive back as quickly as possible the proofs of ‘Wanda’ for press. Mr Mudie leaves England at the end of this month, and it is very desirable that he should have an opportunity of ordering the copies before he goes away” (Nieman, 1994: 53). Mudie was possibly the largest buyer of the expensive three-decker novel and many publishers, including Chatto and Windus, were likely to adjust their matters according to Mudie’s views.

In the same letter the publishers made a new proposition for Ouida’s next novel, *Princess Napraxine*: “[...] we shall have much pleasure in offering you the same terms as for “Wanda” for a new 3 volume story to be completed by next December, provided you will also allow us the right of first serial publication of it in an English periodical” (53). A few weeks later they elaborated further on this offer:

It was after giving the matter very careful consideration that we came to the conclusion that we could only offer you the same terms as for ‘Wanda’ for your next three volume novel, provided you would concede us also the right of serial publication, and we still hope that you may be disposed to reconsider your determination upon this point, as we regret to say in consequence of the steady diminution in the circulation of the library editions of each of your last three stories (in common we believe however with most of the three volume novels that have been issued during the same period), we find that the highest sum we are justified in offering without serial right is £1000. This sum we suggest should be payable, if you are disposed to accept it in preference to £1350 including the serial right, by monthly payments of 50£ to be increased to 100£ per month upon receipt of the complete MS (53).

As it will be seen in following letters, Chatto and Windus and Ouida often bargained with each other. Up to this point, Ouida would be paid £1350 for each novel. In this letter however, Chatto

stated that if she was not willing to accept the serialisation of *Princess Napraxine* they will not be able to offer her more than £1000 due to low demand for her recent novels. John Sutherland, in his book *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, discusses Dickens' additional success through the serialisation of his works with Chapman and Hall: "Whereas Colburn took a novel published originally in volumes and broke it down into 1s. parts Chapman and Hall had Pickwick designed from the first 1s. parts with a view to subsequent consolidation in volumes. The reader had the fiction, as the phrase went, 'warm from the brain' and usually before any critical judgment could be imposed on it, giving the work a singular freshness" (Sutherland, 1976: 21). Serialisation reduced the price of expensive novels in general, which did not seem to be in Ouida's best interest since she profited mostly from the three-decker novel. Although Ouida did publish essays in periodicals throughout the 1880s, she still deemed the serialisation of novels as a highly unfavourable method of publication; she wrote in June 1882 in *The Times*: "The greatest injury in the novel is, in my opinion, the *feuilleton* form (in France) and the serial form (in England) which often precedes publication as a whole: in it the writer sacrifices form and harmony to the object of attaining an exciting fragment for each division of his work" (Ouida, 1882: 2).

Chatto and Windus, although familiar with Ouida's stance concerning the serialisation of her novels, continued pressuring her about the matter. In a letter on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1882 they wrote: "We admire your self sacrifice to your high views concerning the evils of the serial form, and we have much pleasure in agreeing to the conditions upon which you accept our offer of £1000 for the British copyrights of your next three volume novel to be completed by next December;" (Nieman, 1994: 55). Ouida not only refused to yield to the higher offer for the serialisation of *Princess Napraxine*, dissatisfying Chatto and Windus, but she also offered her publishers another exchange of interests. She asked for the completion of her MS to be moved to

February (they first agreed on December and then January) in exchange for her conformity with them in acting as they saw fit concerning the American and Canadian rights of her work of dramatic sketches, *Frescoes* (1883) (60). In a reply to her on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1883, Chatto and Windus agreed but not without consequences for the transfer of the date: “We will also agree that the date of the completion of the novel you are now engaged on shall be delayed from the first of January to the first of February. We will commence on three monthly remittances of 50£ each for the copyright next month” (61).

However, in a letter dated March 4<sup>th</sup> (a month later than the date agreed upon for completion of the MS) Ouida’s publishers asked if she will “kindly” send the completion of the MS at her “earliest convenience” (63). They also inquired about the title of the new novel. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1884 they wrote again: “We have not yet received the whole of the MS, although you will remember you agreed that it should be in our hands by the 31<sup>st</sup> of last December.” (64). It is not clear why the publishers referred to this date, since in their letter on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1883 a shift of the date to February the 1<sup>st</sup> is concurred. They either confused the dates or simply intended to explicitly remind her the initial date they had decided on. Moreover, they are clearly displeased with the title of her new novel: “Princess Napraxine, we fear will not sound very attractive to English readers. We wish you could consent to alter it to ‘Princess Nadine’ or to some short telling English title.” (64). The name “Nadine”, which Chatto and Windus suggest, is quite odd since there is a character in her novel *Moths* (1880) called Princess Nelaguine Nadine, Prince Zouroff’s sister. This proposition could be considered rather unprofessional and careless on Chatto and Windus’s part since *Moths* was published by them and it implies ignorance on their part concerning Ouida’s previous usage of the name. In addition, if the new novel were to carry the title “Princess Nadine” it would automatically associate the protagonist with the

princess in *Moths*, who is quite the opposite in character and heart of the Princess in the new novel.

While Ouida made her opposition to the serial form abundantly clear, she also expressed her distrust towards the American market and its publishers numerous times. So, when Chatto discussed the serialisation of *Princess Napraxine* in an American newspaper and lowered the usual price of payment per novel, this must have been rather anticlimactic for Ouida. American laws forbade the purchase of copyrights of English novels by American publishers, thus, when publishing English novels, piracy was ‘flourishing’ precariously in the American literary marketplace. Sutherland writes of these circumstances: “the astonishing fact remains that the huge and technologically sophisticated American industry drew on the superabundance of English fiction [...] Since copyright was not legally enforced until 1891 the rich harvest of English fiction was open to piracy. Even the honourable houses who paid for early sheets tended to give much lower prices to the English authors who were almost always selling more for less in America than they were at home [...] Still they took what they were offered for, as Trollope pointed out, the alternative was nothing” (Sutherland, 1976: 70-71). The reason why English writers received lower prices from American publishers was due to the fact that the copyrights of their works, when published in America, did not belong to a sole firm and were therefore susceptible to piracy, automatically reducing their value. As a result, English fiction was worth less to American publishing houses, since the works they agreed to publish were not lawfully theirs and could be copyrighted and consequently sold in a much cheaper edition.

In July, 1883 Ouida wrote to the editor of *The Times* to express her concern about the American laws pertaining to the publication of English fiction in the country:

I beg to express my hearty agreement with your opinion that no steps which are taken without the publishers' concurrence on both sides of the ocean will bring about any practical results. As an ounce of fact is sometimes more useful than a pound of argument, I will here state exactly what I lose myself by the absence of any copyright law between Europe and America. From the time that my second novel<sup>54</sup> was published Lippincott's firm, of Philadelphia, always gave me £300 (sterling) for the advance sheets of each romance, and the head of the house repeatedly said that were there a copyright law he could give me as many thousands as he gave under present circumstances hundreds of pounds (Ouida, 1883: 3).

Ouida's vexation is undoubtedly justifiable since she was ill-treated financially and aesthetically as a writer by the downgrading of her work through American cheap editions and piracy. R.C. Terry in his book *Victorian Popular Fiction 1860-1880* suggests that after Chapmans sold Ouida's copyrights to Chatto, the writer "distrusted publishers henceforth, writing to her literary adviser and friend, J.Anderson Rose on 27 July 1884, 'I am very distressed about everything and in these days publishers play sadly into one another's hands to get novels cheap'" (Terry, 1983: 36). Ouida stated this at a time when she was obviously still troubled by the matters that surrounded *Princess Napraxine's* publication.

As shown in previous letters, it is obvious that Ouida is heartily against the serialisation of her novels. Yet, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1884 it seems that she succumbs to the evils of the serial form by consenting to the serialisation of her next novel *Othmar*: "In your letter to Mr Rose you were kind enough to say that you could supply the MS of about a fourth of your novel in February. It will be a convenience to us in making our serial arrangements if you will please let us have the commencement of the story by that time." (Nieman, 1994: 66). The last proposal Ouida had for serialisation, which she turned down, was £1350 for *Princess Napraxine*. After years of refusing to serialise her work, one would expect that when Ouida finally consented, she would be paid justly or at least slightly above the price she was usually offered. However, not only did Chatto and Windus not offer her the same price they were willing to pay for the serial

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<sup>54</sup> *Strathmore* (1864).

form of *Princess Napraxine*, they also reduced the amount substantially to £1000. Deeming their offer justifiable they explicated on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1884: “The discrepancy you notice between the last offer made through J. Anderson Rose for your new 3 volume novel<sup>55</sup> and the price paid for “Wanda” as well as the terms we offered in our letter to you of March 13<sup>th</sup> 1883 for the following story<sup>56</sup>, is entirely due to the serious falling off in our receipts from your recent novels which for some years have not yielded anything like a remunerative return”<sup>57</sup>. To salve her wounded pride Ouida’s publishers sent her the payment for *Othmar* in three installments (£500, £200, £300) in a period of five months, instead of £100 per month (65, 67, 69).

By this time, Chatto and Windus were familiar with Ouida’s delays in completing her MSS and warned her beforehand. Unfortunately, this does not deter her from sending the MSS long after the arranged date. In April Chatto and Windus wrote: “We are already greatly distressed for want of a return of the final revises of the first portion of your new story, for the title of which “Othmar” we are much obliged. Our arrangements for the serial publication are seriously compromised for the want of them. Pray oblige by sending us some to go with by return.” (Nieman, 1994: 69). A month later her publishers wrote again:

We are greatly concerned by the non receipt of the completion of the MS of ‘Othmar’, which we have been implicitly relying upon having in our hands on the first of this month, and we really do not know what we can do in order to keep our engagements for the serial publication, unless you enable us to keep faith by sending the rest of the copy almost immediately. When we were arranging the agreement with Mr Rose, he told us with Mr Rose, he told us that we could have a portion of the MS to commence in February, and certainly without doubt the whole of the MS by the end of April as agreed (70).

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<sup>55</sup> *Othmar* (1885)

<sup>56</sup> *Princess Napraxine* (1884)

<sup>57</sup> This letter has been transcribed by me and can be found in the Records of Chatto and Windus of the Special Collections Service at the University of Reading. Letterbook No. 17, Folder 977.

These letters are probably the most intense and stressful letters Chatto and Windus had ever written to Ouida. They refer to Ouida's solicitor several times in order to highlight the severity of their agreement. The printing house finally received the whole MS of *Othmar* in June, being already two months late, and the novel was finally published in December 1885.

This gradual decline of the three-decker volume was another blow for Ouida's literary career and Chatto's sales. While Chatto believed that the publisher was "the best judge of what is likely to suit the public taste", Ouida, as Max Beerbohm writes, cared for "the romance and beauty and terror of life, not for its delicate shades and inner secrets", which was thrilling to the readers, but too unprofitable and scandalous for her publishers to endorse (Weedon, 1999: 27 and Beerbohm, 1899: 210). Penniless and aged, Ouida wrote to Macmillan that she had been "ill served by her publishers" and "never liked" Chatto and Windus (Weedon, 2003: 151).

Although an extravagant figure, a provocative writer and known amongst others of her literary circle for her profligacy, Ouida seemed to be more in need of literary judgments by her publishers rather than being critiqued for not writing in conformity with contemporary taboos. From her correspondence it is obvious that she merely strived for what was rightfully hers and her indifference in obtaining extra money via unprofessional means proves that she was not as reckless as she was depicted (Appendix, It. 76). Terry notes in his book that Ouida was paranoid about her manuscripts and contracts with her publishers (Terry, 1983: 38). Some might suppose that she was merely cautious. The truth of the matter is that Ouida had often been ill-treated by her publishers, a fact which made her suspicious since amongst other incidents, she was handed over by a publisher whom she considered a friend to an unknown publisher. In a letter written to Chatto on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1885 Ouida wrote: "I have never sacrificed art to gain; but of course the practiced question of where one publishes a work is a purely financial one. I should much

regret to publish elsewhere as we have always been good friends and I hope you will propose such terms as I can consistently with practiced interests accept” (Appendix, lt. 37). As in the case of Chapman and Hall, Ouida in this letter was unwilling to change publishers and while for many selecting a publisher was a ‘purely financial’ matter, this was not the case for her. While Chapman and Hall’s and Chatto and Windus’s actions were not considered illegal at the time, their dealings with her were either unprofessional or very professional, contrary to popular belief. Therefore, Ouida justly deemed them dishonest and an usurpation of one’s mental property.



## *Strathmore and the Sensation Novel*

This chapter will discuss Ouida's novel *Strathmore or Wrought By His Own Hand* and its relation to sensation fiction, as well as the Divorce Act, presenting its success at the time and its subsequent fall into obscurity. The novel tells the story of the cruel philanderer Strathmore, who falls in love with Lady Marion, allegedly Marchioness of Vavasour, and begins an illicit affair with her. He is deceived by Marion into entering a duel with his best friend Erroll, whom he kills, believing that he had disgraced his lover. It is later revealed that Marion had encouraged Erroll's passion for her, and not vice versa, leaving Strathmore to seek vengeance. Strathmore becomes heartless once again and after an attempt to strangle her, he decides to strip Marion of her social status and let her suffer in penury. Strathmore raises and then marries Erroll's daughter, Lucille, and, through her purity and innocence, he endeavours to atone for all his sins. Marion, now disgraced and a social pariah, also seeks revenge, but, once encountering Lucille, she is bewildered by her innocence and seeks penitence, leaving Strathmore and the girl to lead a blissful life.

*Strathmore* was serialised in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1814-1884) from July 1863 until February 1865<sup>58</sup>. As mentioned in the previous chapter Ainsworth was both owner and main editor at the time while Chapman and Hall—Ouida's publishers since the three volume novel publication of *Strathmore* in 1865—published the periodical from 1845-1869 and were proprietors from 1879-1884 (Brake, 2009: 108). Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor in *Dictionary*

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<sup>58</sup> See chapter one, pages 6-7 for details concerning the *New Monthly Magazine*.

of *Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* also argue that “A period of editorial instability ended with W.H. Ainsworth’s acquisition and editorship of the journal (*The New Monthly*)” (444). Indeed, although in previous years the articles ranged from literary to political, Ainsworth seemed to have balanced the subject matters, introducing several disciplines, expanding in this way the scope of its readership. In particular, the issues including *Strathmore* combined poetry, fiction, journalism, history and politics amongst others. *Strathmore* was published alongside Ellen Wood’s (the author of *East Lynne* as she was called) *The Shadow of Ashlydyat* for five months in 1863, but apart from Wood, Ouida was the only well-known literary writer in these three issues<sup>59</sup>.

*Strathmore* became Ouida’s second three-decker volume, her first work with Chapman and Hall, which was published two years after her first novel *Held in Bondage* (1863). As mentioned in the previous chapter while Ouida was already well-known from her short stories in periodicals, it was *Strathmore*—rather than *Held in Bondage*—which made her popular within the book press. In a letter possibly written around 1880 Ouida wrote to Chatto and Windus concerning a manuscript she had written at the time: “I could not send the m.s. for consideration and have never done such a thing since Mr. Chapman first published *Strathmore*”<sup>60</sup>. The letter suggests that Ouida’s manuscripts were never read in advance, in order to determine whether they should be published, and this seems to have started after *Strathmore*, connoting that she gained credibility and recognition through the novel.

Indeed, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October her mother writes in her diary: “Went to New Burlington Street. Mr. George Bentley congratulated Louise very warmly upon the success of *Strathmore*

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<sup>59</sup> Ouida’s name was not mentioned either; she was ‘the author of *Granville de Vigne*’ (later *Held in Bondage*). Most articles in these issues are anonymised and possibly written by the editor or past contributors themselves.

<sup>60</sup> Unpublished letter to Chatto and Windus., 23 June 1880(?). Folder: 1880. Berg Collection, New York Library.

and told her she must eventually take the highest position; he spoke with great sincerity. We went also to Beaufort House; there the printer told her how greatly it had sold” (Lee, 1914: 35). Apart from Bentley’s admiration, however, another indication of Ouida’s gradual rise to fame, upon the publication of the novel in question, was her life-long friendship and collaboration with her German publisher Baron Tauchnitz which began with *Strathmore*. Lee writes in her biography of Ouida:

News of Ouida's success had spread not only to France but also to Germany, and Baron Tauchnitz, when he visited London in the summer of 1865, called on Ouida with a view to including her novels in his well-known series. In October she offered him *Strathmore* and in her letter mentions its success in England and America, "most triumphant," she writes, in the latter country. (36)

Although Ouida had been publishing works for six years, the fact that Tauchnitz approached her after the publication of *Strathmore* is most possibly not coincidental. In 1866 the United States Secretary of Legation in London, Benjamin Moran, visited Ouida in order to deliver her a payment by her American publisher, J.B. Lippincott; Moran writes:

Yesterday afternoon I drove up to a place at - Hammersmith, I never was at before, called Ravenscourt Park, to visit Miss Louise de la Ramée; the authoress of *Strathmore* and other novels [...] My visit was to hand her a bond of the Five-Twenty issue for \$500 from Mr. Lippincott. She took it with delight, and thought the fact of receiving so great a sum from the sale of her books in America, where she owns no copyright, an event in her history. She praised Mr. Lippincott, and deservedly, for his generosity. (Moran, 1915: 488)

By the time this excerpt was written Ouida had already published a third novel, *Chandos* (1866), yet still she is considered the ‘authoress of *Strathmore*’. Moreover, Ouida’s astonishment regarding the amount she received from Lippincott implies that this was a rather high payment, indicative of the novel’s success.

Ouida began her writing career in *Bentley’s* at a time when “serialised sensation fiction

filled the pages of the shilling magazines during the 1860's and into the 1870's" (Palmer, 2011: 9) and monthly magazines seemed to have enriched the cultural authority of both serial writers and the periodical press. This is hardly a coincidence since, although not labelled as a sensation author as Mary Elizabeth Braddon or Ellen Wood, Ouida's stories shared the rhetoric of the gaudy, the body and the risqué, attributed to sensation literature. Indeed, as early as 1872 Ouida was cited as a sensationalist writer in *Age* an Australian periodical in which the reviewer cites Collins, Yates, Braddon and Ouida as "exponents of the highest class sensationalist writers" (Jordan and Patten, 1995: 308). *Strathmore* in particular could undoubtedly be placed amongst the popular sensation novels written by the other authors mentioned above. Wynne argues that: "The fact that the sensation genre and the cheap middle class magazine emerged together as 'modern' forms sharing the same cultural space is scarcely coincidental. The discourse which was forged by this partnership was useful to both serial novelists and journalists as a way of articulating problems of modernity" (Wynne, 2001: 2)<sup>61</sup>. As the sensation genre and the cheap middle class arose around the same time but separately, similarly Ouida's sensationalism differs from that of Braddon and Collins. *Strathmore* was published three years after *Lady Audley's Secret* by Braddon (1837-1915) and the content of her novel was considered rather sensational, depicting a female temptress and fallen woman, a character reminiscent of the figure of Lady Audley. Apart from the novel's sensationalistic plot, Ouida could be associated to the genre due to the short stories she went on to publish, from 1879-1883<sup>62</sup> for *Belgravia*, a periodical formerly owned by Braddon and purchased by Chatto and Windus in 1876. While published during the

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<sup>61</sup> Wynne is referring to the ascension of the middle class and the social transformation and conundrum it brought about.

<sup>62</sup> These dates are in accordance with Ouida's correspondence with Chatto and Windus.

apogee of sensation fiction, *Strathmore* was also written eight years after the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. As it will be seen further on, the genesis of the sensation novel was closely connected to the Act, and its depiction of female characters who gained social power was a social commentary on women who could develop or finally exhibit their ‘non-feminine’ aspects.

According to *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* the term ‘sensation novel’ emerged “in the early 1860s to describe what reviewers saw as a new kind of novel, as wildly popular as it was morally and aesthetically suspect. Intricately plotted and highly suspenseful, these novels told contemporary stories of crime, secrets, and false identities. In both the choice and the handling of their subject matter, they sought to make the reading experience as absorbing and thrilling as possible” (*The Oxford Encyclopedia*, 2006: 463). Alongside *Lady Audley’s Secret*, other prominent novels of the newly founded genre were Wilkie Collin’s *The Woman in White* (1859-1860), Wood’s *East Lynne* (1861), Charles Reade’s *Hard Cash* Rhoda Broughton’s *Cometh Up as a Flower* (1867). Sensation novels thrilled and shocked the Victorian reader and “For Victorian critics, one of the most objectionable aspects of sensation fiction was its frequent depiction of women. [...] what was particularly troubling to other critics was that even though these women are typically punished for their sins, the reader is nonetheless invited to sympathise with them” (465-466). The concept—vital to Victorian domestic ideology—that women epitomise notions of pureness and finesse was thought to have been distorted by these portrayals of morally deviant yet sympathetic women. These depictions were criticised for upsetting the notion, Therefore, sensation fiction seemed to have roused women and distorted the image of the subservient girl, wife or mother.

In an 1864 article from the *Westminster Review*, a reviewer discussing English authors of

the time writes: “We could mention many others endowed with remarkable gifts, even if we were to leave out of consideration that much-admired and much-abused class—that class whom nearly all critics condemn, and nearly all readers now run after—the Sensation Novelists” (WR, 1864: 27). In 1867 Margaret Oliphant writes an article entitled ‘Novels’ in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* which takes a similar tone:

It may be possible to laugh at the notion that books so entirely worthless, so far as literary merit is concerned, should affect any reader injuriously, though even of this we are a little doubtful; but the fact that this new and disgusting picture of what professes to be the female heart, comes from the hands of women, and is tacitly accepted by them as real, is not in any way to be laughed at. (Oliphant, 1867: 260)

In both articles it is apparent that sensation fiction was indeed viewed as injurious to its readers and disparaged by many critics even by writers of Oliphant’s authority.

In the same article Oliphant delves into certain sensationalistic and sensation writers. Regarding Braddon specifically she argues: “She (Braddon) has brought in the reign of bigamy as an interesting and fashionable crime, which no doubt shows a certain deference to the British relish for law and order. It goes against the seventh commandment, no doubt, but does it in a legitimate sort of way, and is an invention which could only have been possible to an Englishwoman knowing the attraction of impropriety, and yet loving the shelter of law (Oliphant, 1867: 263). Again Oliphant seems to be subtly attacking Braddon for her rather abnormal interest in British law and ‘attraction’ to illicitness. The fact that Oliphant considers that fictional bigamy can only be an Englishwoman’s ‘invention’ is rather noteworthy, since what seems to shock her is not the bigamous plot but that a female writer depicts a woman committing bigamy, which was rather uncommon, unlike female adultery. Oliphant also refuses the fact that the boldness of the novel, which is “the only thing that does in any way redeem it” is an excuse for “literary larceny and marvellous public credulity and folly, which is the really

alarming feature” (263). The Scottish author’s standpoints in this article to some extent explain the popularity of Braddon’s novel and present the negative opinion writers and critics such as Oliphant held regarding sensation novels<sup>63</sup>.

In addition, Oliphant also refers to Ouida and *Strathmore* in her article. Her comments on Ouida’s style are similar to those on Braddon’s; after briefly discussing ‘good’ women becoming wicked and vice versa she argues:

We do not feel ourselves capable of noticing, although what we have just said recalls them to our mind, certain very fine and very nasty books, signed with the name of a certain Ouida, it is to be supposed a woman also. They are so fine as to be unreadable, and consequently we should hope could do little harm, the diction being too gorgeous for merely human facilities. We note, in glancing here and there through the luscious pages, that there is always either a mass of glorious hair lying across a man’s breast, or a lady’s white and jewelled fingers are twined in the gentleman’s chestnut or raven curls—preferably chestnut; for “colour” is necessary to ever such picture. (269)

While about Braddon she writes:

She (Braddon) is the inventor of the fair-haired demon of modern fiction. Wicked women used to be brunettes long ago, now they are the daintiest, softest, prettiest of blonde creatures; and this has been wrought by Lady Audley, and her influence on contemporary novels. [...] Miss Braddon is the leader of her school, and to her the first honours ought naturally to be given. (Oliphant, 1867: 263, 265)

Apart from the fact that both Braddon and Ouida were ‘queens’ of the circulating libraries Oliphant finds a certain sensationalism in Ouida’s female characters even though most of them are either red-haired or brunettes while Lady Vavasour is indeed blonde. Nevertheless, Ouida’s ‘nasty’ books—Oliphant mentions *Strathmore* and *Idalia*—and Braddon’s ‘wicked’ but angelic looking women seem to share similarities, although unlike *Strathmore*, *Lady Audley’s Secret* undoubtedly brought about momentous changes in contemporary fiction.

As previously mentioned, Braddon’s novel demonstrates her preoccupation with or

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<sup>63</sup> Oliphant’s article is twenty four pages long and it discusses more than five sensation novels and short stories.

interest in British laws, which can be perceived in Ouida's work as well. *The Oxford Encyclopedia* explains how divorce became a more public issue: "The reform of the divorce law in 1857 also promoted the detection and publicisation of scandal as divorce became more readily available to those who could prove adultery (and, if it was a woman seeking divorce, an additional serious offense such as violence or desertion) (*The Oxford Encyclopedia*, 2006: 465). Indeed, according to The Divorce Act, while a man could divorce on the pretence of adultery, a woman's file for divorce should be based on adultery accompanied by physical abuse or other extreme conditions, such as incestuous adultery, bigamy or desertion for two or more years (Mitchell, 1996: 179 and Bourke, 1994: 47). These terms obviously intrigued certain authors who sought to write not only about divorce and adultery but also about issues such as arranged marriages and morality within wedlock concerning both genders. F.M.L Thompson argues in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*:

Nevertheless, from the mid-nineteenth century, there had been an undercurrent of restlessness among women subordinated within the domesticated role of the respectable middle-class family. The discussion around the first Divorce Act of 1857 was matched by the sensation novels of the 1860's with their themes of bigamy and familial murder which were avidly devoured by a female readership. The secret appeal at the heart of these novels centred on female independence and sexuality, the counterpart to the flourishing world of male pornography whose central theme was male power and childlike female submission. Starting with the claim to control their own property, in the 1860s, women's independence from their secondary status within marriage grew [...] Only upper class women with property of their own could afford legal separation or divorce which reached a high point of almost a third of upper-class marriages in the Edwardian period. (*The Cambridge*, 1990: 105)

The Divorce Act of 1857, however, did not only favour men over women but also "men with money over men without", as K. Theodore Hoppen claims in *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886*, underpinning the supposition that divorce was only for the few (Hoppen, 1998: 100). Feminist committees were established to address matters concerning women's rights, and the



concurrent rise of the sensation novel is no coincidence according to Marlene Tromp, who argues that the genre “tapped into ideological anxieties and contradictions, exposing and often exploding what seemed to be the real limits of discursive possibility” (Tromp, 2000: 71). Thus, the Act along with the emergence of sensation fiction generated a significant upheaval amongst women who deciphered these new developments as a route towards greater autonomy, not only within the household but within society in general, as well as a potential intimidation of men.

Consequently, both the Divorce Act and the sensation novel were deemed symptoms of moral corruption. In an 1857 article entitled ‘The Divorce Act’, the *Lady’s Newspaper* quotes a memorial to Queen Victoria signed by more than a hundred of the clergy of the Church of England:

The undersigned would humbly represent to your Majesty that there is great reason to conclude that the provisions of the Act 13 and 14 Car, II., c.4, commonly called the Act of Uniformity, could not have been present to the mind of Legislature at the time of passing the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act, which, without referring to the said Act of Uniformity, does, nevertheless, contain provisions at variance, and in conflict, with the said Act. For the book of Common Prayer, and therein the form of solemnization of matrimony, as settled at the last revision, A.D. 1661, unanimously subscribed by both Houses of Convocation of both provinces, December 20, 1661, and made to be the law of the land in and by the said Act of Uniformity, contains a prayer in which are found the words following: ‘O God, who by Thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing; Who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint that out of man (created after Thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning; and knitting them together, didst teach that it should never be lawful to put asunder those whom Thou by matrimony hadst made one; with divers other declarations and expressions to the same effect: more especially the prohibitory words, ‘Those whom God hath joiner together let no man put asunder.’ [...] The undersigned, therefore, humbly pray that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to withhold such Order in Council until time shall have been given for Parliament so to amend the said Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act, that the confusion and inconvenience and scandal which arise from a state of the law contradictory to itself may be avoided. (The Divorce Act, 1857)

The fact that the Church of England used the writings of the book of Common Prayer to oppose the Divorce Act undoubtedly raised ethical issues and spawned much trepidation among all

classes. Prime Minister, author and pious figure of the late nineteenth century, William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898), in an 1889 issue of *The North American Review* discusses the extreme terms of the Act and its ramifications:

In England it was urged, on behalf of the bill of 1857, that adultery broke the marriage-bond ipso facto. Yet when the adultery is of both the parties, divorce cannot be given! Again, it is said that the innocent party may remarry, But (1) this is a distinction unknown to Scripture and to history, and (2) this innocent party, who is commonly the husband, is in many cases the more guilty of the two [...] Unquestionably, since that time, the standard of conjugal morality has perceptibly declined among the higher classes of this country, and scandals in respect to it have become more frequent. (Gladstone, 1889: 643, 644)

Both excerpts refer to religious issues in juxtaposition to the Act, rendering it a matter of moral importance. If influential figures, such as the ones mentioned, openly expressed their denunciation, then the subject was inevitably associated with principles and values which were supposedly threatened by the new divorce law. Moreover, the fact that the Church of England held jurisdiction over matrimonial cases before the Act of 1857 was implemented must have also deepened the moral crisis, since divorce was now associated with the state rather than the church, leading to more loose marital and extramarital affairs, as Gladstone highlights above (Wolfram, 1987: 153).

As mentioned in the first chapter, sensation fiction emerged in periodicals in the form of serialisation around the 1860s, three years after the Divorce Act. Strangely enough, the epithet ‘sensation’ was a term used a few years after the genre arose rather than a more recent coinage. Margaret Oliphant in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1862 and *The Quarterly Review* in 1863, with articles both entitled ‘Sensation Novels’, discussed several novels of this array. Referring to Wilkie Collins’s *Woman in White* Oliphant writes: “We cannot object to the means by which he startles and thrills his readers; everything is legitimate, natural and possible; all the exaggerations of excitement are carefully eschewed, and there is almost as little that is

objectionable in this highly-*wrought* sensation-novel” (emphasis added) (Oliphant, 1862: 566). While Strathmore is also ‘*Wrought*’ by his sensations, as Ouida indicates in the title of the novel, it will be seen that, although well-known for her exaggerated tone and narrative style, her work was surprisingly not considered as provocative as *Lady Audley’s Secret*.

As in the case of *Blackwood*, *The Quarterly* also focuses on sensation fiction’s popularity and clout. The reviewer’s fervent and at times sarcastic view of the genre is not inexplicable if one considers how many sensation novels had appeared within three years’ time, twenty four of which she/he briefly but methodically discusses:

A class of literature has grown up around us, usurping in many respects, intentionally or unintentionally, a portion of the preacher’s office, playing no inconsiderable part in moulding the minds and forming the habits and tastes of its generation; [...] Excitement, and excitement alone, seems to be the great end at which they (sensation writers) aim—an end which must be accomplished at any cost by some means or other [...] And as excitement, even when harmless in kind, cannot be continually produced without becoming morbid in degree, works of this class (of sensation fiction) manifest themselves as belonging, some more, some less, but all to some extent, to the morbid phenomena of literature—indications of a wide-spread corruption of which they are in part both the effect and the cause. Called into existence to supply the cravings of a diseased appetite, and contributing themselves to foster the disease, and to stimulate the want which they supply [...] A sensation novel, as a matter of course, abounds in incident. Indeed, as a general rule, it consists of nothing else. Deep knowledge of human nature, graphic delineations of individual character, vivid representations of the aspects of Nature or the workings of the soul—all the higher features of the creative art—would be a hindrance rather than a help to a work of this kind. (*The QR*, 1863: 482-83, 486)

What the reviewer describes here is the alleged paraphernalia of the genre in question: decay of the human mind and dissipation. Words such as ‘morbid’, ‘corruption’, ‘cravings’ and ‘disease’ are references to the supposed mental erosion caused by the writings of sensation authors, according to the article, displaying the adverse image of their works at the time.

Although the word ‘sensation’ is often attributed to *The Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh Review*, which seems to be one of the first journal that refers to the sensation novel as a genre of

literary fiction, writes:

Two or three years ago nobody would have known what was meant by a Sensation Novel; yet now the term has already passed through the stage of jocular use (a stage in which other less lucky ones will sometimes remain for whole generations), and has been adopted as the regular commercial name for a particular product of industry for which there is just now a brisk demand. (*Edinburgh Review*, 1864: 53)

Indeed, the sensation novel became popular by enticing its readers with themes of adultery, bigamy, seduction, deceit, murder, class hierarchy and a plethora of piquant and unethical subject matters, themes that addressed contemporary apprehensions and curiosities. And while the term ‘sensation’ is accredited to several periodicals, the most flamboyant representation of the motifs that encompass it in literature is attributed to Mary Elizabeth Braddon and in particular *Lady Audley’s Secret*.

The fact that Ouida is not mentioned in these journals evinces that she was not considered a sensation writer at the time and this becomes even more palpable in the reviews of her sensationalistic works such as *Strathmore*. The first review to discuss *Strathmore* was published in the *Athenaeum* in the summer of 1865. The general argument of the review is that although the novel possesses vividness it lacks profundity: “clever as the novel is, it is the cleverness of making false jewelry look like precious stones” (*Athenaeum*, 1865: 142). The reviewer attributes this to the influence of French novelists and parallels Ouida’s novel to high-coloured works of art rather than “works of genuine Art” (142). According to the reviewer, Ouida’s knowledge of human nature is inexistent and her characters and depictions of stylish living are not representative models of the upper class. The review considers both her characters and her images of everyday life in *Strathmore* unrealistic, arguing that “both are as fantastic and unwholesome as the smoke which curls up from the perfumed pipe of the smoker of hashish” (142). The portrayal of upper-class men with no other preoccupation than drinking wine and

conversing about women and horses, does not reflect real life in the reviewer's opinion, who attributes Ouida's fanciful depictions to her gender: "The author makes a not uncommon female mistake, in fancying she is daring in thought when she is only indecorous of speech" (142). This remark is quite interesting since it depicts the differentiation between women and men writers at the time. It seems as if an author should avoid falling into 'common female errors' of inappropriateness in order to be appreciated for his or her work. The review ends with a brief but detailed summary of the plot and description of the main characters. It is stated that: "The tale is extravagant and unhealthy, and yet there is a degree of painstaking which makes it to be regretted that it should not be turned to better account" (143). This comment along with the reviewer's synopsis of the novel hints that the *Athenaeum* is slightly intrigued by Ouida, but cannot condone the eccentricity and immorality present in her work. As in the case of *Moths* (1880), *Strathmore* here is also mocked for its unconventional, and at the same time commonplace, happy ending: "She (Marion) becomes a sister of Charity in distant lands. Strathmore forgives everybody he has injured; he forgives himself especially,—and he and Lucille live in perfect happiness ever after" (143). The review ends with this quote without commenting on it, which intimates a disapproval of Ouida's style in *Strathmore* but not censure of it.

Contrary to the *Athenaeum*, in the *London Review* commentary of *Strathmore* during the same year the reviewer emphasises that which seems to arouse the readers' interest: "the complete and picturesque sketch of every figure brought on the scene; whether it be the vicious coquette [...] or the 'grand guilty Strathmore,' the hero, or Lucille [...] a charmingly ideal figure" (*London Review*, 1865: 338). According to the review, Ouida's story is not one that unravels a mystery or creates suspense and tension, but a novel in which the remarkable

employment of the characters in the plot is what makes it worthy of praise. While the *Athenaeum* states that “The story is interrupted with pages of misty metaphysics, studded with aphorisms which are at once ostentatiously cynical and extremely commonplace”, the *London Review*, on the other hand, writes that *Strathmore* is a work of an artist because Ouida possesses the skill to avoid “sermonizing, prating in platitudes, or abounding in common-place punishments of poetic justice” (143 and 339). The extent of opposition in these statements is notable and is probably attributed to the fact that the *London Review* was mostly considered “literary and philosophical rather than political”<sup>64</sup>, which explains its focus on the plot and the characters rather than discussing whether Ouida’s novel mirrors real life or not (Waterloo Directory, 2003). The review ends with the discussion of *Strathmore*’s remorse and its narrative which is reminiscent of the pathos and poetry of the Romantic era, while the reviewer also comments that very few authors can be viewed as a proper paradigm of the Romantic school, and even fewer can sustain the reader’s interest (*London Review*, 1865: 339). The review highlights the sentimentality of Ouida’s plot by focusing on *Strathmore* rather than the sensuality of it embodied by Lady Vavasour. This omission along with the review’s account that the novel does not arouse any mystery surely contributed to its disassociation from sensational fiction.

The last review of *Strathmore* is published in the *Westminster Review* in 1876, thirteen years after the novel’s publication. This article consists of an analysis of thirteen novels by Ouida, one of which is *Strathmore*. This review combines the main subjects discussed in the previous reviews. As in the case of the *London Review*, the *Westminster* considers the novel equally fascinating: “the plot being a remarkably good one, and the characters mostly—that of

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<sup>64</sup> From Alvar Ellegard’s *The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain*. Goteborg: Goteborgs Universitets Arsskrift. 63:3 (1957): 10. Found in the Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800 - 1900, Series 2, 2003.  
<http://www.victorianperiodicals.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/series2/defaultLoggedIn.asp>

Strathmore in especial—being carefully-developed studies” (WR, 1876: 367). The reviewer then goes on to the matter of human nature, and here the journal is in accord with the *Athenaeum*: “Unfortunately, some of the best work of this authoress is spoilt by two leading faults—untruth to nature, and exaggeration of tone and incident—which no critic can lightly pass over. Untruth to nature is shown in the defective treatment of the character Lady Vavasour, whom we are led to regard as an exceptionally cruel, sensual women, until we come to the last chapter, when, for the sake of a happy ending to the story, she is transformed into a converted Christian, foregoes the revenge that she has sought for twenty years, and forgives her enemies in the most affecting manner” (367). In the similar aforementioned quote from the *Athenaeum* mentioned previously, the reviewer seems to be mocking Strathmore’s sudden repentance and eagerness for catharsis, whereas this review is sarcastic about Marion’s unexpected turn away from the pursuit of vengeance and towards Christianity and a life of remorse. The *Westminster* therefore seems more sympathetic towards Strathmore possibly because it considers him a victim of love. Although the review regards Lady Vavasour’s change of heart as unrealistic and illogical, “one certainly feels that she is forced to do violence to her nature, and act the penitent, in order that two lovers be made happy” (369-370). Therefore, the reviewer suggests that Ouida reforms her villainess for the sake of the plot and a happy ending. When referring to his attachment to the cunning woman, the reviewer seems to admire Ouida’s narrative: “The development of his passion, the way in which he almost hates the woman who, by her soft influence, proves to him, for the first time in his life, that he is not the master of himself, and then ends by so passionate a devotion that he sacrifices ambition, reputation, even friendship, are described with great subtlety and skill” (369). The review finishes once again with a reference to the uniqueness of this novel “marked, however, at times by the absence of simplicity and nature” (369), agreeing thus with the

*Athenaeum* that: “there is a great deal of colour in the story, but no depth” (*Athenaeum*, 1865: 142). Like the other reviews, the *Westminster* concentrates more on Strathmore and does not comment equally on Lady Vavasour’s sexuality and shrewdness with the excuse that she is an unrealistic character, overlooking again the figure of the femme fatale or any other overtones concomitant to sensational fiction.

However, both Ouida and Braddon integrate this category of increasingly assertive female personas, femme fatales, in the novels under consideration. According to Jennifer Hedgecock in *The Femme Fatale in Victorian Literature: The Danger and the Sexual Threat*, due to the Divorce Act, as well as the property and diseases laws of the 50s and 60s, the femme fatale employed in sensation novels was a part of an “evolving assertiveness on the part of women” (Hedgecock, 2008: 3). Demarcated by its immoralistic motifs and defiant female characters, as well as being reinforced by the divorce law, the sensation novel intrigued women, especially those of the middle class. Concerning Ouida in particular, Jordan states that: “[...] her early novels reflect key aspects of the sensation novel: an interest in illicit sexuality, bigamy, and matrimonial law more generally, and in aggressively ambitious and sexually dangerous heroines, and an overturning of fixed conceptions about gendered identity” (Jordan, 2011: 223). Indeed, Ouida’s explicit and penetrating sensationalism echoes certain features of the sensation novel and often amplifies them as well.

Returning to the concept of the femme fatale Ouida’s heroine/villain is undoubtedly “aggressively ambitious and sexually dangerous”. In the novel *Marion* enjoys the voyeuristic gaze of men and when she first meets Strathmore, while travelling alone with her maid she does not seem to care about the gossip for doing so:

“No, I am travelling incognita. I cannot reveal that secret. I like Romance and Caprice, monsieur, they are feminine privileges, and following them I have found far more amusement than if I had gone in one beaten



track between two blank walls of Custom and Prudence. It may have made me enemies; but, bah! who goes through life without them?" [...] Out on the still night air rose the matchless music of voice, rich, clear, thrilling, a very intoxication of sound; mingling with the ebb and flow of the waters, the tremulous sigh of the leaves, and the rival song of the birds in the boughs. Those sitting within in the darkened chamber listened spell-bound; the peasantry, laughing and chatting under the low roof of the hostelry, hushed their gossip in enchanted awe; the boatmen in the vessel moored in the shadow below looked up and left off their toil; and, as suddenly as it had rung out on the summer air, the exquisite melody ceased, and died away like the notes of a bell off the silence of the night. (Ouida, 1870: 45, 53)

This picture of Marion singing conjures the image of a pious figure, who sings within a convent's walls, of a siren who entrances her listeners, and of a temptress who finds pleasure in shocking her spectators. She cares little of society's opinions and her admiration of Epicureans—those who advocate that pleasure is the ultimate good—is openly expressed throughout the novel. As regards the fictional archetype of the femme fatale and her view of personal affairs, Hedgecock writes:

Indifferent to society's judgment of her, the femme fatale uses her victim's pity to force her way back into middle-class life, her immoral behavior being simply a consequence of these circumstances. By naming the number of harsh realities she has suffered, she shocks her listeners, who include naïve men, good-hearted middle-class women, or self-absorbed aristocrats; she arouses their sympathy, a ploy that increases the success of her scheming. (Hedgecock, 2008: 62)

Although Lady Vavasour does not narrate any hardships she might have experienced in order to attract, she does however shock and overwhelm her listeners with her moral laxity and indifference. On the contrary, however, Lady Audley herself is a perfect counterpart of Hedgecock's description:

Remember what my life has been; only remember that. From my very babyhood I have never seen anything but poverty. My father was a gentleman; clever, accomplished, generous, handsome---but poor. My mother---But do not let me speak of her. Poverty, poverty, trials, vexations, humiliations, deprivations! *You* cannot tell; you, who are amongst those for whom life is so smooth and easy; you can never guess what is

endured by such as we. Do not ask too much of me, then. I *cannot* be disinterested; I cannot be blind to the advantages of such an alliance. I cannot, I cannot! (Braddon, 2010: 21-22)

Lady Audley appears honest, revealing that an ‘alliance’, a marriage, between Sir Audley and herself would be a temptation for a young girl who has lived in penury her whole life; a tactic through which Lucy attains the old man’s trust and compassion, as a femme fatale would.

In a chapter of *Murder and Moral Decay in Victorian Popular Literature* discussing certain novels from the 1850s until the 1870s, Beth Kalikoff argues that “Like the criminally wicked and lustful women of *Uncle Silas*, *Bleak House*, and *Hard Cash*, Lady Marion Vavasour in *Strathmore* is another version of Lady Audley and her peers. Her ruthless and terrible pursuit of power through the use of her eroticism results in her downfall and raises disturbing questions about female sexuality and desire for control over men” (Kalikoff, 1986: 99). While Lady Vavasour and Lady Audley share many similarities, as will be disclosed in this chapter, Ouida’s character, despite her repentance at the end of the novel, is much more ruthless than Braddon’s. From the beginning of the novel, Lady Vavasour is depicted as a voluptuous character who attracts attention and seduces with her distinctive beauty; even Strathmore, a man who has never loved nor believes in love, is intoxicated:

[...] this woman's beauty captivated him against his will, and made the blood course quicker through his veins, as though he had drunk in the rich bouquet and the subtle strength of some rare ruby wine, warm from the purple clusters of the South. The faint rose-blush, that was the most dangerous of all Lady Vavasour's charms, since it was the one which flattered most, and most surely counterfeited nature, came on her cheek, and her eyes met his with a languid sweetness. It was the first whisper of the syren's sea-song, that was to lead by music unto wreck and death; it was the first beckoning of the white arms of Circe, that were to wreath, and twine, and cling, till they should draw down their prey beneath the salt waves flowing over the fathomless abyss whence there is no return. (Ouida, 1870: 113-114)

Apart from their external features—blonde with blue eyes—the women’s beauty emanates different sensations, Marion’s appearance being darker and more elegant than Lucy’s childlike physiognomy:

They were the most wonderful curls in the world---soft and feathery, always floating away from her face, and making a pale halo round her head when the sunlight shone through them [...] That very childishness had a charm which few could resist. The innocence and candour of an infant beamed in Lady Audley's fair face, and shone out of her large and liquid blue eyes. The rosy lips, the delicate nose, the profusion of fair ringlets, all contributed to preserve to her beauty the character of extreme youth and freshness. She owned to twenty years of age, but it was hard to believe her more than seventeen. Her fragile figure, which she loved to dress in heavy velvets and stiff rustling silks, till she looked like a child tricked out for a masquerade, was as girlish as if she had but just left the nursery. (Braddon, 2010: 16, 55)

So although they have a striking influence on their surrounding environments, their ‘sweetness’ is rather divergent. Lady Audley does not quite possess the erotic qualities of Lady Vavasour, whose beauty is associated with seduction and death, in contrast to Lucy’s revivifying and angelic demeanour.

Conscious of her beauty, Lady Vavasour manipulates men for her personal gratification. Her rather siren-like demeanour and physique mesmerises men and directs them towards their catastrophes:

Was it the strange grouping of those scarlet flowers circling the dead gold of her hair that gave to her something startling with all her seductiveness, bizarre with all her beauty, dangerous with all her delicacy; something that made him involuntarily think of Lucrezia Borgia, Catherina Medici, Clytemnestra, Frédégonde, Olympia Mancini, Gunilda, in a pêle-mêle chaos of every divine demoniac, every fatal fascinatress that the world had seen since the world began; something which struck him with nothing less than aversion for the first moment that the glowing coronal on the amber hair met his eyes again; but which then forced him against himself into a dizzy, blind, breathless, admiration, such as no woman had ever wrung from him. (Ouida, 1870: 109)

Marion is depicted as an enchantress and compared to powerful women of history and myth not only for her beauty but also her ability to hypnotise men in the manner of a sorceress. Ouida

exhibits her protagonists' wickedness bluntly with her descriptions throughout the novel, whereas Braddon displays Lucy's malevolence mostly through her lies, rather than her behaviour, sustaining thus the first image we have of her:

For you see Miss Graham was blessed with that magic power of fascination by which a woman can charm with a word or intoxicate with a smile. Every one loved, admired, and praised her. The boy who opened the five-barred gate that stood in her pathway ran home to his mother to tell of her pretty looks, and the sweet voice in which she thanked him for the little service. The verger at the church who ushered her into the surgeon's pew; the vicar who saw the soft blue eyes uplifted to his face as he preached his simple sermon; the porter from the railway-station who brought her sometimes a letter or a parcel, and who never looked for reward from her; her employer; his visitors; her pupils; the servants; everybody, high and low, united in declaring that Lucy Graham was the sweetest girl that ever lived. (Braddon, 2010: 11, 12)

Natalie Schroeder, in her article entitled "Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion: M. E. Braddon and Ouida", argues: "The eroticism in Ouida's fiction is far less subtle than in Braddon's, and feminine rebellion is more openly determined through overt sexuality [...] Marion Vavasour differs from Lady Audley in that she exploits a mature sexuality rather than childishness to secure power over men" (Schroeder, 1988: 92, 93). Indeed, although both women are highly admired and enthralling characters, Braddon chooses to focus on hidden deceitfulness and social façades, possibly depicting the pretences assumed by the nineteenth century upper classes, especially amongst women, whereas Ouida evinces the profligate lifestyle of her fictitious upper class, implicitly commenting on that of her period.

The issue of fidelity and the boundaries of moral codes are also examined in Ouida's and Braddon's texts. Adultery is a discretely accepted norm in *Strathmore*, while in *Lady Audley's Secret* it is disguised in the form of bigamy and is not discussed in the novel:

[...] when women once pass the boundary line they generally clear the ramparts. I suppose the Marquis gives the latitude he takes just, at any rate. We're not often so on those points; we take an ell, but we don't give an inch. That's the beauty of vesting our honor in our wives; it's so much easier to forbid and

dragonize another than ourselves! What a droll thing by the way, it is, that an Englishwoman piques herself on being THOUGHT *faithful* to her husband, and a Frenchwoman on being thought *unfaithful*; their theory's different, but their practice comes to much the same thing! They're like schismatics in the Churches, they split in semblance and on a straw's point, but, *sous les cartes*, agree to persecute and agree to dupe! (Ouida, 1870: 94)

Women in *Strathmore* deceive their social surroundings by presenting themselves as faithful. They all flirt with Strathmore and Erroll, some send love letters, and have affairs, but do not talk about their indiscretions although they are known to everyone, even their husbands. While Lady Audley does not mask herself as a faithful wife, since she is indeed loyal to him, she still participates in the practice of flirtation, according to Sir Audley's daughter Alicia:

"You should have heard her laugh and talk with them; throwing all their compliments and fine speeches back at them, as it were, as if they had been pelting her with roses" [...] "She is a vain, frivolous, heartless little coquette," said Alicia, addressing herself to her Newfoundland dog, Cæsar, who was the sole recipient of the young lady's confidences; "she is a practised and consummate flirt, Cæsar; and not contented with setting her yellow ringlets and her silly giggle at half the men in Essex, she must needs make that stupid cousin of mine dance attendance upon her. I haven't common patience with her." (Braddon, 2010: 56, 106-107)

Richard A. Kaye in *The Flirt's Tragedy: Desire without End in Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* discusses flirtation and adultery: "Flirtation, however risky, seldom falls within the purview of the law, and it is one of the features of flirtation that allows it to retain its radical force. Adultery lends itself to surveillance and legal strictures; flirtation, expertly deployed, renders them meaningless" (Kaye, 2002: 208). Therefore, Ouida's upper classes do not seem to care for the legal ramifications of adultery, since not only is it not frowned upon, they are also wealthy enough to face the law if necessary. On the other hand, Braddon selects a safer path for her protagonist, who has committed bigamy which can only be proven by her first husband, George Talboys, whom she believes has abandoned her or is dead.

It seems that Ouida, by incorporating infidelity and deception within the upper class in her early works such as *Strathmore*, attacks marriages of convenience and adultery within these bonds as a mutually arranged concession in order to escape the ramifications of a divorce. This approach also functions as a mockery of the Divorce Act, which was obviously not fair in its treatment of women, thus the avoidance of divorce and the preference of an arranged marriage prevailed. Ouida's satirical tone is depicted through adultery which is an acknowledged norm amongst her upper class characters:

[...] If he's a gentleman, he keeps quiet, and you English are never quiet, unless it's 'made worth your while.' *You're much more fit for the Middle Ages than you are for the present day.*"

"I think I am. Things were called by their right names then; men sharpened their steel, and struck a straight, swift blow; now they sharpen their pen, and wound in the back, sheltered under a shield of anonymity. Then they had 'honor,' and held it at the sword's point; now they've 'mock morality,' have lawyers to defend it (which is something like giving an artificial lily to a sweep to keep unsoiled), and trade in their shame, and ask for 'costs' for every stain, from a blackened eye to a blasted name! Caramba! this claret is corked!"

"Uncommonly inconvenient times; your favorite ones, though, très cher," said Lechmere, taking some marons glacées: "One would be in perpetual hot water. Fancy an inch of cold steel waiting for us at the bottom of every *escalier dérobé*, and an iron gauntlet dashed on our lips every time we laughed away a lady's reputation! Where would we all be? It would be horribly troublesome."

"No doubt! We're much wiser now. We chat amicably in the clubs with the husband after leaving madame's dressing-room. I don't dispute our expediency; it's a quality in the highest cultivation in the age [...]"

(Ouida, 1870: 66)

Ouida's portrayal of marriage within high society is that of 'expediency', a social strategy that satisfies all parties involved. Barbara Weiss in *The Hell of the English: Bankruptcy and the Victorian Novel* argues that: "[...] marriage of convenience, of course, has a long history dating back well before the Victorian era of high finance, and has long been one of the traditional concerns of the novel" (Weiss, 1986: 168). However, marriage of convenience as a theme was not revived in nineteenth century literature only as a result of existing financial matters but also

due to women's preference to live a loveless but socially respected life—which a divorce certainly would not offer—rather than a humble loving one.

Ouida continues her exposé of these types of nuptials through Erroll's description of Lady Vavasour's relationship with her husband:

[...] and there were invariably between them that polite *bon accord*, that cool don't-careish, very happy-to-see-you never-interfere-with-you sort of friendship which is the popular hue of 'marriage in high life,' and is decidedly the best and least troublesome it can wear. [...] "I dare say it is particularly lucky the Marquis has elastic conjugal principles; it's lucky for any husband that has a handsome wife, and yet likes to live in peace with his brethren. Lady Vavasour is a very exquisite beauty, there's no disputing that; *you'll* rave of her, Bertie; at the same time, I never heard beauty reckoned as the best guarantee for marital fidelity!". (Ouida, 1870: 108, 144)

Lady Vavasour's marriage is the epitome of a marriage of convenience and adultery in *Strathmore*. It could be said that George also has elastic conjugal principles since he decides to leave his wife and child for three years, after almost a month of matrimony, and although it is due to financial reasons, it is still a form of abandonment if one considers that according to the Divorce Act of 1857 a divorce could be issued if one partner has abandoned the other for two or more years. Therefore, the fact that Lady Audley remarries—declaring to Sir Audley that she does not love him but admires him—and remains faithful to her new husband is somewhat understandable and acceptable, unlike Lady Vavasour's conspicuous infidelity and inexplicable manipulation of the men surrounding her.

The acceptance of infidelity amongst the upper class characters in *Strathmore*, absent in *Lady Audley's Secret*, depicts the class's indifference to adultery and possibly Ouida's image of mid-nineteenth century marriage. Ronald Pearsall in his 1969 *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality* discusses matrimony within the upper class and indicates that "over the upper-class marriage, love match or not, loomed the shadow of the marriage settlement"

(Pearsall, 1969: 174). Therefore, although divorce was more accessible to the upper class, perhaps the encumbrance of an arranged marriage prevented spouses from filing a divorce and encouraged the tolerance of adultery. Ouida delineates this image:

The Marquis, who came thither, en route to Spa, for a few days, chiefly because the venison and the char out of the White Ladies woods and waters had had such a celebrity for centuries that he was curious to test their reputed superiority, was blessed with the most gentlemanlike indifference to his lovely wife's vagaries. He knew she was always flirting with somebody —who, it didn't matter much; perhaps when he did think about it, his chief feeling was a certain malicious pleasure in seeing so many of his fellow-creatures chained, and worried, and fooled, by the seductive tormentress whom he had let loose on the world with her *droit de conquete* legitimized by his coronet. The Marquis was a philosopher, and the very husband for his wife: their marital relations were admirably ordered for the preservation of peace and friendship; they saw little or nothing of one another (the secret recipe for conjugal unity), and, by mutual consent, never interfered, he with her caprices *de coeur*, nor she with his 'separate establishments.' When he had first married, people had said his lordship was madly *entete* with his bride; but that inconvenient folly had departed with a few months' wear: and now he was proud of her loveliness, but wisely and placably negligent on whom that loveliness might shine; a wisdom and placability never more needed, perhaps, than now at White Ladies. (Ouida, 1870: 158)

What Ouida calls here “the secret recipe of conjugal unity” is the embodiment of the settled marriages she describes. The Marquis, a man who travels and encounters many beautiful and rapacious women, marries the fairest and most coveted of them all, which is his ‘profit/settlement’ from this union, while Lady Vavasour weds a much older man whom she does not love in order to freely and lavishly enjoy his wealth.

On the other hand, Braddon’s picture of Sir Audley watching Lady Audley flirt is much more subtle: “You should have seen her while we were abroad, with a crowd of gentlemen always hanging about her; Sir Michael not jealous of them, only proud to see her so much admired” (Braddon, 2010: 56). The reason Sir Michael does not envy his wife as the Marquis does in the beginning of his marriage is because Lady Audley is a domestic heroine, unlike Lady Vavasour. She is depicted as a kind, caring and faithful wife, who is not often seen alone outside



her household; thus, trustworthy in her husband's eyes, he is overwhelmed by the sentiment of admiration rather than jealousy when she interacts with other men. Concerning flirtation and wooing, Pearsall writes: "Courtship for the upper classes was elegiac, literary, comfortable, not weighed down by the prohibitions and proscriptions, the embarrassments and the formalities, that made courtship for the anxiety-prone middle classes something of a cakewalk" (Pearsall, 1969: 176). According to Pearsall the middle class gradually became "the prevailing force enshrining Victorian mores, and, as smaller groups, the upper classes of the aristocracy found themselves forced to toe to the middle-class line" (xiii). So while Braddon seems to portray Pearsall's description of the upper class, which abides by the norms of the middle class and keeps their scandalous secrets hidden, Ouida exhibits the ramifications of unrestricted courtship in aristocracy.

Social status is another polemical subject that Ouida and Braddon explore, but both in a rather different way. Marion and Lucy have married wealthy aristocrats; however, Marion is not considered lower class and the reader never contemplates that Lady Vavasour is not a lady until it is revealed, unlike in the case of Lucy, whose social background is not concealed or abruptly disclosed. It is known to the reader and Sir Michael that Lucy is not an upper class woman and their difference in social status is never an issue in Braddon's novel. However, Ouida differentiates the lower classes from the upper class throughout her novel and depicts the intolerance of the latter towards their social inferiors:

"[...] pretty *paysannes* never had any attraction for me; I like the *tourneure* of the world, not the odor of the dairy. Give me grace and wit, not rosy cheeks and fingers fresh from the churn and the hencoop; the perfume of frangipane, not of the farm-yard. Petrarch might adore a miller's wife —*ce n'est pas selon moi*— and I think the flour must have made Laura's chiome d'oro look dusty: I never took a mistress from my tenantry! Who is she Erroll?"

Erroll took the Manilla out of his mouth, sent a puff from it into the air, and turned to Strathmore with his gay, insouciant laugh, clear as a bell and sweet as a girl's, that had so much youth in it: "I'll tell you some other time. Old story, you know, nothing new in it. We're all fools about women, and she's sweetly pretty, poor little thing! beats any of those we shall have to-night hollow, Lady Millicent and all of 'em!"

Strathmore raised his eyebrows and stroked his moustaches: "An *old* love! and you're as enthusiastic as that? What must you have been in the beginning! Thank Heaven I was not here. Poor Lady Millicent! sal volatile by the gallon would never restore her if she knew a young provincial, smelling of the hayfield, with a set of cherry ribbons for a Sunday, and a week-day aroma of the cowshed (if not the pigsty), was said by the difficile Sabreur to beat her hollow! and she a Court beauty and a Lady in Waiting! So much for taste!"

"Pigsty? Cowshed? You didn't see her just now, Cecil; you couldn't!" broke in the Sabreur, disgusted.

"I saw a woman, my dear Erroll, c'était assez; she was your property, and I noticed no more."

"For God's sake don't suppose me such a Goth that I should fall in love with a dairymaid, Strath!" said Erroll, plaintively. "She's nothing of that sort, nothing, I give you my honor! Let me clear my character, pray. *Should* I love a 'Phillis in a hazel-bower?' I hate cobwebs, dew, and earwigs; and I can't bear a coarse color for a woman! I say, Strathmore, don't let out anything about it, though, will you? Don't tell the other fellows; there's no object, and they'd only ——"

"Chaff you? Exactly!" "No! I don't care a straw for chaff," said Erroll, meditatively, with his Manilla in his mouth, drawing his Glengarry over his eyes. "It's only boys who mind chaff, *we* don't. But they might get hunting her out, you see —would, I dare say, *I* should in their place— and I don't want that. I wish to keep the thing quiet. I have managed to do it hitherto; and she would cut up as rough at insult as Lady Millicent herself; you understand?". (Ouida, 1870: 28)

Here a relationship with a woman of a lower class is unfathomable to Strathmore and disgraceful for Erroll. Strathmore would never consider an affair with a woman of a different social class than his, whereas Erroll fears the contempt and banter of other men and bringing disgrace upon the girl and Lady Millicent if they were to discover his affiliation with the lower class.

Braddon's Sir Michael Audley, on the other hand, is utterly indifferent to the social disparities between himself and Lucy:

"I scarcely think there is a greater sin, Lucy," he said solemnly, "than that of the woman who marries a man she does not love. You are so precious to me, my beloved, that deeply as my heart is set on this, and bitter as the mere thought of disappointment is to me, I would not have you commit such a sin for any happiness

of mine. If my happiness could be achieved by such an act, which it could not---which it never could," he repeated earnestly, "nothing but misery can result from a marriage dictated by any motive but truth and love." [...] "How good you are---how noble and how generous! Love you! Why there are women a hundred times my superiors in beauty and in goodness who might love you dearly; but you ask too much of me. You ask too much of *me*! Remember what my life has been" [...] "Do not ask too much of me, then. I *cannot* be disinterested; I cannot be blind to the advantages of such an alliance. I cannot, I cannot!". (Braddon, 2010: 20-22)

Even after Lucy has revealed her past mishaps, she admits that although she likes him she does not love him and that a potential marriage would be a temptation since she has always lived in poverty. Sir Audley nevertheless wishes to marry her. Therefore, social class is addressed differently in both novels, with Ouida endeavouring to present the inequalities and discrimination spurned by the upper class, while Braddon focuses more on the façade of marriage and the alleged 'angel of the house'. Both writers seem to mock not so much the constitution of matrimony but society's failure to deal with an unsuccessful marriage or acceptance of an arranged one, an "alliance". As Anthony S. Wohl in *The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses* accurately writes: "In the angry, rebellious, and outspoken heroines of the novels [sensation novels], women readers found sisters under the skin whose protests against the confining roles of daughter, wife and mother were both welcome and cathartic" (Wohl, 1978: 105).

Both Strathmore and Sir Michael believe that they know their beloved's past, however Strathmore has the privilege to be warned about Lady Vavasour's past relationships which he ignores:

At Biarritz, last year she played the very deuce with Marc Lennartson; you remember him don't you, Strathmore—Austrian Cuirassiers, you know? She drew him on and on, made him follow her about like her greyhound, fooled him before everybody, and then turned him off coolly for the Prince de Vorhn, and laughed at him with a blow of her fan. Lennartson had lost his head about her, and he shot himself through

the brain! I knew that for a fact; nothing but that woman at the bottom of it; and the very night she heard of his death she went to a fancy ball, fluttering about in her diamonds. By Jove! (Ouida, 2008: 132)

Strathmore chooses to overlook Marion's potentially lethal manner towards men due to her external demeanour and wit, but these would not stand in his mind if she were of a lower class. Neither the narrator nor the protagonist considers Marion vicious because she is a married woman who permitted another man—with whom she openly flirted—to pursue her, but only for the reason that she had the audacity to attend a festivity the day after the man's suicide. Erroll is thus worried about his best friend, seeing that Strathmore's morals are deteriorating even more in the presence of Lady Vavasour: "The office of a moral censor sits on you very ill; attention to a married woman is not so extraordinarily uncommon in our set that it need alarm your virtue" (172). Erroll replies "Virtue be hanged!" explaining to Strathmore that it is not his virtue he is concerned about but rather his honor or mental state since he deems Marion a very dangerous creature. He also exclaims: "I am sinner enough myself God knows, and have plenty to answer for; but no passion should have so blinded me to honor, let her have tempted as she would, that the wife of an absent guest should have ceased to become sacred to me, while trusted to my protection, and under my own roof!" (180). Erroll accuses Strathmore of dishonouring himself, the Marquis and Lady Vavasour by becoming her lover in his household and in the absence of her husband. Strangely enough the Marquis's presence would render Strathmore's affair somehow acceptable through Ouida's lens, which again profligately delineates society's tolerance and apathy towards a promiscuous upper class married woman and her lover.

On the contrary, Braddon's emphasis on Victorian conservatism mostly regards women within wedlock:

"How long is that nephew of yours going to stay here?" "As long as he likes, my pet; he's always welcome," said the baronet; and then, as if remembering himself, he added tenderly, "but not unless his

visit is agreeable to you, darling; not if his lazy habits, or his smoking, or his dogs, or anything about him, is displeasing to you.” Lady Audley pursed up her rosy lips, and looked thoughtfully at the ground. “It isn't that,” she said hesitatingly. “Mr. Audley is a very agreeable young man, and a very honourable young man; but you know, Sir Michael, I'm rather a young aunt for such a nephew, and—” “And what, Lucy?” asked the baronet, fiercely. “Poor Alicia is rather jealous of any attention Mr. Audley pays me, and - and - I think it would be better for her happiness if your nephew were to bring his visit to a close.” “He shall go to-night, Lucy!” exclaimed Sir Michael. “I've been a blind, neglectful fool not to have thought of this before. My lovely little darling, it was scarcely just to Bob to expose the poor lad to your fascinations. I know him to be as good and true-hearted a fellow as ever breathed, but - but - he shall go to-night.” [...] Sir Michael Audley told his nephew that the Court was no home for him, and that my lady was too young and pretty to accept the attentions of a handsome nephew of eight-and-twenty. Robert only shrugged his shoulders and elevated his thick black eyebrows, as Sir Michael delicately hinted all this. “I *have* been attentive to my lady,” he said. “She interests me - strongly, strangely interests me;” and then, with a change in his voice, and an emotion not common to him, he turned to the baronet, and grasping his hand, exclaimed – “God forbid, my dear uncle, that I should ever bring trouble upon such a noble heart as yours! God forbid that the lightest shadow of dishonour should ever fall upon your honoured head - least of all through any agency of mine!”. (Braddon, 2010: 131-132)

The moment Lady Audley hints to Sir Michael that his nephew might be infatuated with her, he asks him to leave the house and the young man feels utterly ashamed at the likelihood of disgracing his uncle, which is the extreme opposite of what Strathmore does. Although both Braddon and Ouida take part in the debate on morality in the Victorian era, Braddon's depiction of a sense of honour through several of her characters, presenting a variety of individual traits and classes, is possibly what rendered her work more realistic and acceptable, whereas Ouida's stringent focus on the grimness and depravity of the upper class, has a dystopian and unnaturallistic tone, often unpleasant to the mid- and late-nineteenth century reader.

In her PhD thesis, Carla Molloy discusses the performative facet of gender roles in mid-Victorian domestic fiction and considers *Strathmore's* ending “rather conventional” (Molloy, 2008: 81). The fact that the villainess not only survives but also repents, while the hero/villain

marries the daughter of his best friend whom he has also killed, is far from conventional. Molloy continues her argument:

Although explicitly an aristocratic character, the contours of the domestic heroine are at once recognisable in Lady Vavasour. This conception of femininity is revealed to be an identity that is consciously performed in order to ensnare men and further her social aims. *Strathmore* is here clearly influenced by *Lady Audley's Secret*, in which Braddon famously uses the figure of Lady Audley—a bigamist and would-be murderer who, in order to further her social aims, pretends to be an angelic, childish, lovable woman—to shatter the naturalness of middle-class femininity. [...] Like Lady Audley, Lady Vavasour disguises a ruthless and cruel nature under a mask of domestic femininity that carefully preserves the binary oppositions around which middle-class femininity was constructed. (81)

Lady Vavasour and Lady Audley are indeed both 'mondaines'<sup>65</sup> but the fact that Marion often moves about—and not in the company of her alleged husband—and gains nothing but sadistic pleasure from fooling Strathmore and other men, renders her quite the opposite of a domestic heroine. While both women relish high life, Marion does not share Lady Audley's ambitious economic and social pursuits. Representing the callous idiosyncrasies of the upper class, Lady Vavasour can be viewed as more wicked and ruthless than Braddon's protagonist, who is in any event driven by an incentive, albeit a distorted one, since she has no other purpose besides amusement and ego reassurance. In addition, unlike Lady Audley, Marion does not externalise or materialise her emotions by harming her victims physically; she repents at the end of the novel rather than perishing for her sins<sup>66</sup>.

Hedgecock argues that Wilkie Collins and Thomas Hardy rendered female autonomy unachievable so death was the only fate available to the fallen woman: "In sensation novels, all duplicitous women are caught and punished for their transgression [...] By the end of the novel,

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<sup>65</sup> Ouida's terminology of a female dandy in *Princess Napraxine* (1884).

<sup>66</sup> Lady Vavasour along with Vere in *Moths* (1880) are amongst the few fallen women that do not die in Ouida's novels.

the femme fatale almost invariably suffers in some form, by being married to a charlatan, institutionalised in an asylum, or committing suicide [...] the woman is either good or bad, and redemption can only be achieved in death” (Hedgecock, 2008: 101, 105, 164). Similarly Kalikoff writes: “Lady Vavasour must be punished for her social as well as sexual crimes. Like Lady Audley, she is an interloper [...] Like Lady Audley and women in street ballads of the period, Marion has transgressed against social and sexual authority and must be punished” (Kalikoff, 1986: 105). But she is not. She does not die in an asylum like Lucy, but instead finds shelter and consolation in repentance. Ouida breaks a common nineteenth century literary convention here, being the death of the fallen woman, by permitting her villainess to live. Although Marion is not lawfully married, the fact that she is not ‘punished’ with death for her deception, sham marriage and supposed adultery renders Ouida’s implicit critique of the Divorce Act, since a divorce socially stigmatised a woman, thus ‘castigating’ her, as in the case of Lady Audley. As the femme fatale who is a paradigm of the embryonic confidence of women, Ouida’s new femme fatale was the ‘abnormal’ embodiment of their gradual emancipation and assertiveness and the espousal of radical changes in the conduct and ideologies of the female gender.

As aforementioned, Ouida was often known as “the author of *Strathmore*”, since for some it was one of her most prominent novels and for others because it was the work which made her name more popular. George Saintsbury in his review of a later novel, *Moths*, says that in this novel the writer fails to reflect the fervour she had in other more prominent works such as *Chandos* or *Strathmore* (Saintsbury, 1865: 193). Indeed, in her early novels Ouida concentrated on immorality and dandyish demeanour, a mild ‘fervour’ which did not seem to upset the critic or reader as much as sensation fiction did. This also explains the uproar caused by her later novels, which shift from the caprices of the male and female indulger to a more profound social

critique—much as the sensation novel—of the mid to late nineteenth century, of both upper and lower, classes, focusing more on male misconduct and decorum. Andrew Radford in *Victorian Sensation Fiction* writes that the ‘Sensation Novel’ “was a self-evidently substandard literary category, synonymous with the swift growth of industrial capitalism and the emergence of large urban centres with newly exploding populations and new social classes” (Radford, 2009: 1). Although Ouida’s characters are much crueller than Braddon’s only villain, the fact that Braddon intensely addresses the social changes Radford refers to through the character of a single woman, Lady Audley, surely contributed to the novel’s popularity and perennality, whereas Ouida’s focused description of the vulgarity of more than a few women and men of the upper class most likely led *Strathmore* into obscurity and deemed it less sensational.





## Parody and Burnand's

# STRAPMORE!

From March 1878 until May the same year, the humorist periodical *Punch* published in fifteen installments a work by Sir Francis Cowley Burnand entitled *Strapmore! A Romance by Weeder*. An intentional misspelling of Ouida's name and novel *Strathmore*, *Strapmore* is a parody of not only *Strathmore* but of approximately ten of Ouida's novels. Sir Francis Cowley Burnand, playwright and humorist, was the editor of *Punch* for twenty-six years (1880-1906). He

was the first *Punch* writer to be knighted (1902), and is the longest serving editor of the magazine (excluding Mark Lemon who was the founding editor) (Stedman, 2004)<sup>67</sup>. He parodied various famous writers such as Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott and Oscar Wilde. Before joining *Punch*, Burnand wrote for its penny rival *Fun* (*Punch* was sold for a threepence) and it was partly due to the antagonism with new magazines that Lemon “hired away from the staff of *Fun* the irrepressible Francis Cowley Burnand, a young master of puns and burlesque” (Leary, 2010: 32 and Waller, 2006: 211). A. A. Milne, a later *Punch* regular, considered that the magazine under Burnand’s editorship “grew less intolerant of opinions with which it disagreed”, depicting thus a shift in parody, which in itself was a tolerated means of jesting and ridiculing without being harshly censured, as will be seen further on through the examination of contemporary criticism (Waller, 2006: 210). According to Philip Waller, Burnand’s “authorship was not confined to *Punch* or to spin-off series such as *Happy Thoughts* (1866), which went through twenty editions [...] His speciality was light comedy, that often ignored flip side of Victorian earnestness” (Waller, 2006: 210). In a similar tone, Burnand wrote *Strapmore* in which he parodies mainly Ouida’s upper class ostentatious men as well as her contemptible low class women, and offers elaborate descriptions of them.

In an autobiographical article written in 1883 by Burnand in the journal *The Theatre*, the humorist states:

I am told that the most successful of my parodies was *Strapmore*, “by Weeder,” and that went through seven editions within a fortnight. A close parody requires the most careful work, and the author’s peculiarities cannot be entirely mastered from one book. Not until I find myself writing an ordinary letter in the style of the author I have been studying do I feel quite sure that I can safely start the parody. (*The Theatre*, 1883: 107-108)

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<sup>67</sup> I have come to the conclusion that Burnand is the longest serving editor of *Punch* through the reading of the biographical notes of all the editors of the magazine to this day.

Indeed, Burnand read several of Ouida's works in depth, namely: *Strathmore* (1865), *Chandos* (1866), *Under Two Flags* (1867), *Tricotrín* (1869), *Puck* (1870), *Folle-Farine* (1871), *A Dog of Flanders* (1872), *Two Little Wooden Shoes* (1874), *In A Winter City* (1876) and *Ariadne* (1877), and this chapter will primarily concentrate on his parody of *Strathmore* and *Folle-Farine*. Burnand never mentions Ouida's name or these novels before or after the story; instead, in his acknowledgments—where he dedicates his book to George Du Maurier—Burnand writes: “As in consequence of his (Du Maurier's) suggestion I went through a long and arduous study of the works of that talented authoress whom I have re-christened phonetically ‘WEEDER.’” (*Strapmore*, 1878). Similarly, apart from “Strapmore” and “Weeder”, Burnand also performed phonetical alterations to these titles, stating under his title: “Author of ‘Folly And Farini’, ‘Under Two Rags’, ‘Arryadn'ty’, ‘Chuck’, ‘Two Little Wooden Jews’, ‘Nicotine’, ‘A Horse with Glanders’, ‘In Somers Town’, ‘Shamdross’” (1878). Burnand's *Strapmore* was mentioned by more than thirty British periodicals during his time and has been briefly discussed by more than ten.

At the time *Strapmore* was published Ouida had written sixteen novels, almost half of the novels she wrote in her lifetime, and had worked with two of the most well-respected and well-known publishers of the time, Chapman and Hall and Chatto and Windus. As Lee mentions: “These years (1870-1879) were undoubtedly the time of Ouida's greatest vogue. One proof of this may be found in Sir F. C. Burnand's parody of *Strathmore as Strapmore! A Romance, by Weeder*, which appeared in *Punch* in 1878. It extends to eighteen chapters, and burlesques in most diverting fashion both the novels of society and the Italian peasant stories” (Lee, 1914: 97, 98). The fact that Burnand set himself the task of reading almost all of her novels in order to

write a parody indicates that Ouida was a significant figure in the literary market. Indeed D'Israeli writes about this matter in 1834:

The taste for parody will, I fear, always prevail; for whatever tends to ridicule a work of genius, is usually very agreeable to a great number of contemporaries [...] and it was because Homer was the most popular poet, that he was most susceptible of the playful honours of the parodist; unless the prototype is familiar to us a parody is nothing! (D'Israeli, 1834: 104, vol.I)

D'Israeli highlights the fact that one had to be famous in order to be parodied and that the practice of parody was accepted by a great many other writers.

A few years later, in 1841 playwrights Henry Mayhew and Mark Lemon co-founded the humoristic weekly magazine with the assistance of engraver Ebenezer Landells (Healey, 2004). Parody was revitalised through the pages of *Punch*. According to nineteenth century journalist Wilfrid John Meynell the magazine had played a significant role in the social and political affairs in England:

Its literary history is well known. Editorially associated during recent years with the grave name of Tom Taylor, its columns have been lightened by the incomparable writings of Mr. F. C. Burnand; while the drawings of Mr. du Maurier have further helped its pages to retain their hold on the public affection. *Punch* is no believer in the old maxim that the labourer is worthy of his hire, for it every week declares that the editor does not undertake to pay for any outside contributions he may accept—an announcement which, in the interests of the amateur, and for the credit of the profession, we own that we shall be glad to see withdrawn. (Meynell, 132-133)<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, Lemon decided that contributors, after a probationary period, would be paid a weekly salary allocating them a weekly column (Brake, 2009: 357 and Adrian, 1966: 44-50). This decision, as Meynell insinuates, set the amateur considerably apart from the professional and possibly created an elitist clique within the circle of humourists, in which Burnand was included.

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<sup>68</sup> Wilfrid John Meynell (1852–1948) was the husband of poet and journalist Alice Meynell. See June Badeni, “Meynell, Alice Christiana Gertrude (1847–1922)”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2010.  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35008>

Nevertheless, caricaturists gained an attractive venue with the establishment of *Punch*, which appealed to the emergent desire for literary and visual amusement and contemporary humour (Adams, 2012: 88-89). Although the magazine did not publish extended fiction, it offered regular space to a number of fiction writers such as William Makepeace Thackeray, Shirley Brooks and Percival Leigh, and illustrators such as Charles Richard Doyle (Dickens' Christmas Books) and John Tenniel (*Alice in Wonderland*) (Cross, 1988 and Huggins, 2004: 129). Being published in such a prestigious magazine, Burnand became popular and undoubtedly influential, as Meynell points out.

An anonymous columnist in *Time*, which argued earlier that parody is a burlesque mimesis of an original work, also writes that the word burlesque itself, "the name of the author who was first identified with it, and the names of the gentlemen who have been the most prolific of contemporary burlesque-writers, begin with the same letter. [...] Byron and Burnand in our own day have been the largest contributors to the burlesque stage" (*Time {London, 1879}*, 1880: 128). Burnand's effort to depict Ouida's extravagance as a writer by focusing on so many of her books in merely one novella displays the cleverness and literary acuity of its author.

Burnand's success as a parodist and *Strapmore*'s popularity as well are discussed even twenty years after the novella was written; in 1902 *The Academy and Literature* places Burnand alongside other famous parodists such as William Makepeace Thackeray, Bret Harte and Charles Stuart Carverley. However, instead of mentioning one of their works, the article refers to *Strapmore* in order to contrast it with *Borrowed Plumes* by Owen Seaman, a writer, journalist and satirist (Mellini, 2004), who also succeeded Burnand as editor of *Punch* in 1906. The reviewer writes that Seaman's work "aims rather at an imitation than parody pure and simple", while praising Burnand's work: "*Strapmore*, for instance, as a sustained effort in ripe,

unflagging, spontaneous fun, is probably the best example of its kind in English” (*Academy and Literature*, 1902: 338). It is crucial to underscore here the success and virtuosity of Thackeray and Harte as humorists in the late nineteenth century and thus, the significance of placing Burnand’s name next to theirs. Thackeray parodied Scott’s *Ivanhoe* in *Rebecca and Rowena* and generally focused on parodying criminal characters in Edward Bulwer-Lytton, William Harrison Ainsworth and Charles Dickens’s works. Harte’s most famous work is *Condensed Novels* in which he parodies Dumas, Dickens and Hugo, amongst others<sup>69</sup>. Burnand parodied Dickens, Scott and Hugo as well, in his works *Pickwick* (1881), *Robbing Roy, or, Scotch'd and Kilt!* (1879) and *One-and-Three!: By (that distinguished French Novelist) Fictor Nogo* (1878). Therefore, Burnand belonged to a circle of well-accomplished humorists who often caricatured the same authors, all who were or came to be established writers.

An understanding of how parody was perceived in the beginning of the nineteenth century—in order to later juxtapose it to a shift in the Victorian era—is crucial to the discussion of this chapter. The early nineteenth century perception of parody is described in an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, written by Lord Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850)<sup>70</sup>, Scottish writer and judge. The article is a review of the parody *Rejected Addresses* by Horace and James Smith, in which he discusses literary imitation<sup>71</sup>:

A vulgar mimic repeats a man’s cant-phrases and known stories, with an exact imitation of his voice, look and gestures: But he is an artist of a far higher description, who can make stories or reasonings in his

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<sup>69</sup> See J.A. Sutherland’s *Thackeray at Work* (1974) and Patrick Morrow’s *Bret Harte* (1972).

<sup>70</sup> See Michael Fry’s “Jeffrey, Francis, Lord Jeffrey (1773–1850)” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/view/article/14698>

<sup>71</sup> *Rejected Addresses* was a collection of odes parodying the style of several romantic poets such as Scott, Byron, Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth. See Kathleen Kuiper’s *Prose*, New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2011, p. 177.

manner; and represent the features and movements of his mind, as well as the accidents of his body. The same distinction applies to the mimicry, if it may be so called, of an author's style and manner of writing. To copy his peculiar phrases or turns of expression—to borrow the grammatical structure of his sentences, or the metrical balance of his lines—or to crowd and string together all the pedantic or affected words which he has become remarkable for using—applying, or misapplying all these without the least regard to the character of his genius, or the spirit of his compositions, is to imitate an author only as a monkey might imitate a man—or, at best, to support a masquerade character on the strength of the Dress only; and at all events, requires as little talent, and deserves as little praise [...] It is another matter, however, to be able to borrow the diction and the manner of a celebrated writer to express sentiments like his own—to write as he would have written on the subject proposed to his imitator—to think his thoughts, in short, as well as to use his words—and to make the revival of his style appear a natural consequence of the strong conception of his peculiar ideas. (Jeffrey, 1812: 434-435)<sup>72</sup>

Lord Jeffrey's tone in this excerpt is rather strict. His views concerning parody, the parodist and the parodied convey the seriousness with which the aforementioned were perceived. A parody, being a revival of an author's style and a highlight of his/her techniques and idiosyncrasies in writing, draw attention to the structural and linguistic excesses of the work.

Although mid-nineteenth century practice of parody was equally prominent, that which rendered it distinct from what came before and after has not been examined by modern critics. One of the few works that have profoundly dealt with parody throughout the nineteenth century is Chris Hokanson's PhD thesis *Copycat Culture: The Role of Memory and Parody in Nineteenth-century British Information Society*. Hokanson discusses Victorian parodies and how their topical allusions were set to generate an ephemerality in comic literature and the way in which "parody became a useful genre for helping Victorians express and work through their anxieties about information overload" (Hokanson, 2007: 22, 10). He analyses how the Victorians

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<sup>72</sup> Lord Jeffrey's comments on parody were also published in *The SR* in 1885 as well as *The Spectator* in 1916, rendering his words current and accepted.

resorted to parody, sensation fiction, mnemonics<sup>73</sup>, and detective fiction to deal with the plethora of literary texts inundating them. In regard to parody, he writes:

Nonsense and parody became important Victorian genres because they mirrored and made light of the mental discord caused by information overload. Moreover, Victorian parodies are particularly playful forms of remembering their ur-texts, and this is precisely what makes them so useful. Parodies, as well as nonsense verses and prose, subvert expectations and get away at times with trenchant critique, precisely because, cloaked in silliness, they seem harmless and non-threatening. The Victorians emphasized parody as play with language, transforming the genre into another apparently innocent language game to be added to Victorian parlor entertainment involving palindromes, acronyms, and nonsense verse. As such, parody helped to disrupt the Victorians' faith in language's ability to mean exactly what it says. Whatever feels threatening and is hard to reconcile can often be more easily explored under the guise of play, and in many ways the proliferation of parody and nonsense verse demonstrates how the Victorians dealt with growing anxieties about the disruption of linguistic autonomy (92, 93).

Thus, in a way Victorian parodies served as a means of conveying certain ideas that would otherwise shock readers, and they evaded doing so by hiding behind the veil of silliness surrounding them.

On the contrary, throughout the eighteenth century, Hokanson argues that:

[...] parody was the figurative rapier of choice for the critic who sought to lampoon both political figures and current writers and literary fads. The witty satires of the Scriblerus Club, the mock-heroics of Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding's parodic rewriting of Samuel Richardson's Pamela (1740-1741) as Shamela (1741) and Joseph Andrews (1742): all used parody to mock contemporaries and literary styles. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Tories wielded parody as a weapon to discredit republican ideals they feared would spread from France to England [...] Parody becomes less political in England toward the end of the Napoleonic war because France's experiment in democracy had failed and all the British factions were united behind fighting the dictator. Instead, parody became primarily a reactionary means of mocking and curbing literary innovations. At this time, Romantic-age parody mainly functioned as a weapon to police the boundary of the sayable and to protect literary conventions. Parody became primarily a tool for criticizing literary rivals (93-94, 95)

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<sup>73</sup> *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1874 offers a synopsis of the art of mnemonics: "The fundamental plan of artificial memory is, then, to transfer a train of ideas, the archetypes of which are not sensible objects, to another train of ideas whose archetypes are not only sensible but objects of sight" (1874: 586).



Unlike Swift's and Pope's acidic satires in the eighteenth century and humourists' sharp denigration of the Aesthetic and Decadence movement at the end of the nineteenth and early into the twentieth century, mid to late-nineteenth century comedy was less effusive and more frivolous<sup>74</sup>. Hokanson notes that as the novel matured and became more prominent in the 1830s, prose parodies began to supersede poetic parodies and bourgeois readers—who were Ouida's audience as well—found satire spiteful and ignoble while parody, fit more moderated Victorian taste (6); “With its scathing attacks on well known politicians and writers, satire of the *ad hominem* sort became less prominent. Parody's disassociation from personal attack and more concentrated focus on ridiculing literary styles and sub-genres allowed writers to assert which literature was most worth reading” (99). Thus, parody developed into a method that in a sense freed mid-nineteenth century novelists from politics or romance and emphasised the quality of their writing styles rather than the scope of their subjective reproofs.

However, in order to understand mid-nineteenth century parody we must consider its relation to another category, burlesque. In 1879 a columnist in *Time* writes: “the name of the author who was first identified with it (burlesque), and the names of the gentlemen who have been the most prolific of contemporary burlesque-writers, begin with the same letter. [...] Byron and Burnand in our own day have been the largest contributors to the burlesque stage” (*Time* [London, 1879], 1880: 128). Burnand's effort to depict Ouida as a writer by focusing on so many of her books in merely one burlesque displays a caricaturist characterised by ingenuity and astute imagination. In another article entitled “Burlesque: Past and Present” published a year later, *Time* defines burlesque: “Burlesque is really a generic term, comprehending such divisions as parody,

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<sup>74</sup> Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is abundant with disguised ironies and condemnations, concerning mainly political issues such as the unpopularity and reputed partiality of the Hanoverians and the clashes between the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans, while Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* is a commentary on society's coteries and fixation upon trivial matters, such as etiquette and fashion.

travesty, farce, and even caricature. Etymologically the word is synonymous with jest. Whatever tends to cast ridicule upon any object or individual, whatever form of satire brings absurdities, inconsistencies, extravagances of any kind into strong relief, is a kind of burlesque” (*Time*, 1880: 127). Burnand a few years later wrote “The Spirit of Burlesque”, in which he mainly discussed the burlesque in theatre, but also offered general delineations of the term: “‘To burlesque’ is to make ridiculous by means of exaggeration, mimicry, parody, grotesque distortion, travesty, and caricature. [...] ‘To burlesque’ requires the exercise of the imaginative and creative faculties” (Burnand, 1888: 164-165). Both definitions depict burlesque as a general comic category which includes several literary forms including parody.

The first concise commentary on *Strapmore*, which appeared in the year of its publication in *The Saturday Review* considered Burnand “the very genius of the ridiculous”, and his parody possibly his magnum opus (*SR*, 1878: 737). The article goes on to validate this accordingly: “Not only is *Strapmore* a most successful and lightly-touched caricature of the style of an author whose extravagance can hardly be caricatured, but at every page it is full of the quaintest and most unexpected terms of humour and bits of brilliant and apparently spontaneous nonsense” (737). The characterisation “lightly-touched caricature” and “spontaneous nonsense” is not only highly reminiscent of a burlesque but also demonstrates that Burnand’s parody was not forceful, direct nor critical in its target subject and author. Kathleen Kuiper in her book *Prose* (2011) views burlesque as a genre where “the serious is treated lightly and the frivolous seriously” and while she identifies a strong association with parody—in which the language and style of the author or the work in question is imitated—burlesque is considered to be a more general and abrasive form of comedy (Kuiper, 2011: 175). In the vein of Hokanson, Kuiper also discusses briefly that burlesque from being “cruelly satirical and often defamatory” in the eighteenth

century, came to be a more kind, punning and “light entertainment” in the Victorian era (2011: 175-76). The fact that Burnand offered light amusement but at the same time managed to caricature “an author whose extravagance can hardly be caricatured” could testify that his work is also a commentary on the seriousness and austerity with which readers and critics assessed Ouida’s works at the time.

Prominent British historian and critic, George Saintsbury, who wrote articles about Ouida’s *Ariadne* (1877), *Moths* (1880) and *Pipistrello* (1880), also reviewed *Strapmore* in 1878 in *The Academy*, where he was a critic for several years. Saintsbury often referred to Ouida’s literary style as influential—more often injuriously—of new and younger female authors, and deemed her fictional world unreachable and overwhelming<sup>75</sup>. However, the critic seemed to enjoy Burnand’s works of the authoress’s novels and in the article regarding *Strapmore* Saintsbury comments on the parody alongside seven other novels published the same year: “We can congratulate Mr. Burnand on having recovered in *Strapmore* a much higher level of burlesque than that which he has lately reached. The reason is obvious. In some of his more recent work he has either used exhausted ground, or attempted to burlesque things not properly burlesquable. His present subject is a model one, and his treatment of it ought to make all but philosophers or fools laugh” (Saintsbury, 1878: 83). Some of the burlesques published before were *Alonzo the Brave; or, Faust and the Fair Imogene. A Tragical, Comical, Demoniactal, and Whatever-You-Like-To-Call-It Burlesque* (1800), *Robin Hood; or, The Forester’s Fate. An Extravaganza* (1862) and *Snowdrop; or, The Seven Mannikins and the Magic Mirror. An*

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<sup>75</sup> See the articles written by Mr. Saintsbury with reference to Ouida in *The Academy* between 1875 and 1885. In particular: George Saintsbury’s, “New Novels”, *The Academy* 267 (June 1877): 530-531, “Ouida’s *Moths* (Book Review)”, *The Academy* 17 (March 1880): 192-193 and. “The Present State of the Novel”, *Fortnightly Review* 43:253 (Jan. 1888): 112-113.

*Entirely New and Original Burlesque Extravaganza*. (1864)<sup>76</sup>. Nonetheless, although, Saintsbury like other critics considered Ouida's settings unrealistic, the fact that Burnand focuses mainly on lightly parodying her extravagant descriptions of the upper class and the misery of the lower classes might convey the humorist's espousal of Ouida's portrayals.

## ***STRAPMORE***

The first chapter of *Strapmore* is mostly a parody of *Under Two Flags*. The protagonist in Burnand's work, the Honourable Pinto Peeze of the First White Guards reminds us of the Hon. Bertie Cecil of the First Life Guards in *Under Two Flags*. Ouida's Bertie has the nickname 'Beauty', whereas Burnand's character is known in the Brigade as 'Sweetie', a clear parody of Ouida's effeminate character. Apart from Lady Guenevere, Bertie's mistress, the man also seems to be involved with the coryphée, the Zu-Zu, as she is called. Likewise, Pinto Peeze, is associated with the "petillante" Fi-Fi and the "spirituelle" Do-Do (Burnand, 1878: 5), to whom, amongst other women, he sends bracelets and horse-chestnuts (Burnand, 1878: 6-7), while Bertie sends them bracelets, bouquets and terriers (Ouida, 2008: 7). These mild alterations in the names of Ouida's characters are of course a parody of her works but they are not exaggerated versions of them, which raises the question of why Burnand took the time to read so many long novels and produce not only a light parody but also a graphic imitation of them. I argue that Burnand possibly viewed his novella as continuation or an appreciation of Ouida's works and wished to

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<sup>76</sup> Although, the original stories were quite famous, Burnand's burlesqued renditions did not meet the same fate, aside from *Strapmore*. 'The Athenaeum' in 1892, page 665, George Moore in *Impressions and Opinions*, in 1894, page 141 and Victor Plarr in *Men and Women of the Time: A Dictionary of Contemporaries*, 1899, page 155 are several texts in which *Strapmore* is considered Burnand's best or best-known parody.

claim them from some of the harsh criticism they had received.

In addition to altering names, Burnand, in the vein of a burlesque which is lengthy and loose in its subject matter, also recreates scenes from Ouida's novels:

Bertie Cecil drank a glass of Curacoa, put his tall, lithe limbs indolently off his sofa, and surrendered himself to the martyrdom of cuirass and gorget, standing six feet one without his spurred jacks, but light-built and full of grace as a deer, or his weight would not have been what it was in gentleman-rider races from the Hunt steeple-chase at La Marche to the Grand National in the Shires". (Ouida, 2008: 7)

[...] Pinto Peeze drank a glass of tonic Solfa, laid his pipe on the small marquetiere Not-wot at his side, and, seating himself at his *tabula rasa*, submitted himself to his valet's hands. Then, when he had been frizzed and curled he stretched out his lithe clean-shaped limbs, and had soon drawn on his John Boots over his white leather pantaloons that fitted as tightly as the dress of the harlequin, and in another second he had assumed his breast-plate, sash, tunic, gorget, shirt of mail, belt, clean starched collars, tags, bearskin, epaulettes, spurs, embroidered gauntlets, regulation moustachios, helmet, and plumes of rainbow hues, and then his servant, with all the celerity of a practised professional hand, fastened on his polished shield and buckler, and lastly, attached to his side his glittering sword, with its jewelled hilt, that had been presented to him by some of the fairest demoiselles who had seen him pass their windows". (Burnand, 1878: 7-8)

Surprisingly enough Ouida's physical description of Bertie is brief, and that is what Burnand makes use of here. He elaborates excessively where Ouida does not so as to emphasise and exaggerate her superfluous writing and her endless and recurrent lists of descriptions. One never-ending sentence, abundant with inanimate objects, an exaggerated description of a single act, wearing a uniform, Pinto having his hair styled, frizzed and curled, before he puts on his armour, is an image one would expect to find in Ouida's texts. According to an article published in *Bell's Weekly Messenger* in 1811, a high burlesque ridiculed "low images and affairs in a lofty style" and was "frequently mere grave stupidity and arrant nonsense" (*Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 1811: 61). *Strapmore* could be indeed considered utter nonsense and it does mock trivial and degrading scenes and relationships; however, this is done mainly for the upper classes and their lavish lifestyles, which cannot but insinuate that Burnand is also commenting on their vulgarity and

pettiness. The theatricality of his scene and the fact that it mocks the seriousness of acts of everyday life is another trait of burlesque, according to an article in *The Saturday Review* in 1874: “one sort of burlesque (is)—that which, attempting no special parody, relies upon an absurd and unheard of version of affairs of everyday life to create amusement, which object it very generally attains” (*SR*, 1874: 140). However, Burnand’s depictions of actions of daily life are neither ‘absurd’ nor ‘unheard’ of, which again demonstrates that the parodist had something else in mind when reading Ouida’s novels and parodying them.

Another example of Burnand’s humorous depiction of the frivolous preoccupations of the upper class is when we meet Pinto Peeze’s (‘Sweetie’) brother, Alf Pinto Peeze in *Strapmore* and Bertie’s (‘Beauty’) brother Berkeley in *Under Two Flags*:

[...] a young fellow of scarcely twenty, like himself in feature, though much smaller and slighter in build; a graceful boy enough, with no fault in his face, except a certain weakness in the mouth, just shadowed only, as yet, with down”. (Ouida, 2008: 7)

But in the countenance of the younger, Alf Pinto, there was a mixture of greenness, and downiness, which was entirely absent from that of the elder. The greenness was in his eye, the downiness on his upper lip. The constant use of a stick, as a support, gave to his whole bearing an air of feebleness; but the use of a stick was also a tradition in the Pinto line, and was a tribute to his Order. Strangers unacquainted with the family would always look upon a member of any one of its branches as 'stuck up'. But this notion would be soon dissipated on the closer intimacy”. (Burnand, 1878: 9-10)

In Ouida’s novel, Berkeley has a slight weakness on his lips, while, Burnand’s version of Berkeley, Alf Pinto Peeze, is depicted as asthenic; he not only has an abnormality on his face, but also has a disability which forces him to walk with a stick. Both descriptions refer to beauty and external appearance, rather significant subjects amongst the upper classes in Ouida’s novels. Alf’s “greenness”, “downiness” and “feebleness” is an exaggeration of Ouida’s brief description of Berkley and illustrates Burnand’s contrast between the beautiful and the ugly, the strong and

the weak. He also seems to have employed a pun here when he alludes to the young Peeze using a 'stick' and the 'branches' of his family being 'stuck up'. This ugly and weak man now, with this 'stick', shows prestige and authority, while the word choice indicates stiffness and pomposity in the temperaments of this family. All of these men that Burnand is depicting are meant to represent not a particular character in one of Ouida's novels, but a type of character that recurs in her novels, which suggests a way in which *Strapmore* engages in analysis of her work rather than the ludicrous reproduction of its particularities. By elaborating on the humorous depiction of his own characters who, similar to characters such as Bertie, Strathmore and Sartorian in Ouida's novels, are consumed by apathy, conceit and wealth, Burnand seems to expand on Ouida's images of upper class men rather than mocking them.

Likewise, chapter four of *Strapmore* is wholly dedicated to Ouida's novel *Strathmore* and the handsome and cruel young Strathmore, a man untouched by women who eventually falls in love with an imposter, Lady Marion Vavasour:

As the perfume of her hair reached him, as he met the glance of her eyes, as he looked on her delicate dazzling face where the light from the chandelier shone upon it, this woman's beauty captivated him against his will, and made the blood course quicker through his veins, as though he had drunk in the rich bouquet and the subtle strength of some rare ruby wine, warm from the purple clusters of the South. The faint rose-blush that was the most dangerous of all Lady Vavasour's charms, since it was the one which flattered most, and most surely counterfeited nature, came on her cheek, and her eyes met his with a languid sweetness. It was the first whisper of the syren's sea-song, that was to lead by music unto wreck and death; it was the first beckoning of the white arms of Circe, that were to wreath, and twine, and cling, till they should draw down their prey beneath the salt waves flowing over the fathomless abyss whence there is no return". (Ouida, 2008: 113-114)

[...] the fragrance of her hair crossing him like the perfume of some exotic, her lovely lips, whose charm even he had admitted, so near his own that their breath fanned his cheek. He looked up and met her eyes; the dazzling beauty of this woman ran through his veins like subtle fire, and threw him off his guard, as though the air had been suddenly filled with the dreamy intoxicating odor of narcotic fumes, that bewilder the reason and charm while they weaken the senses". (117)

With all nonchalance, all hauteur, all easy grace, unchanged, but with her lips blanched and drawn over her pearly teeth, the most beautiful woman of her time. (204)

[...] this Messalina with her cheek of childlike bloom, this Circe with her glance of gazelle-softness, and wreathed her white arms about him, and leaned on his her fragrant lips. (236)

[...] used her beauty with fearful and pitiless power to accurse her own soul and all others that she drew into the Circean tempting. (361)

In *Strapmore* Sweetie plays the role of Strathmore and Lady Regula Baddun—a pun for a ‘regular’ lady, a ‘bad one’, a loose woman—takes the place of promiscuous Lady Marion Vavasour:

[...] on the terrace, stood Lady Regula, surrounded by her thousand butterfly admirers [...] His (Strathmore’s) eyes glanced from the voluptuous form, the pearl-white teeth, the deep crimson lips of the Lady Regula, full and rich as if fresh from a Circéan banquet, and the radiant masses of heavy golden locks that would have roused the admiration of a divine Brahma, and that had long excited the envy of La Teddington, and fell on a man who, by the aid of a night-light and a pair of spectacles, was quietly reading the evening paper in the corner. [...] she smiles the intoxicating smile that had sent men raving by hundreds, and caused women to tear their hair in rage. Her eye fell on Sweetie. In an instant he kicked over the table, forgotten the Do-Do and the Loo-Loo, and had leapt over the balcony, to kneel at the feet of the Circéan sorceress. (Burnand, 1878: 33-34)

This scene parodies Strathmore’s fascination with the enchantress Marion by ridiculing Pinto, who knocks down a table in an attempt to jump from the balcony and fling himself to Lady Regula’s feet. Apart from the fact that he is not injured in the process of the act, he also performs this acrobatic in the presence of everyone, including Lady Regula’s husband, who is revealed at the end of the chapter to be the man with the pair of spectacles seen in the previous passage, apparently untouched by the whole scene: “Her husband was still reading in the corner. Lady Regula and Sweetie were sitting on the terrace” (36). So, while in Ouida’s novel Strathmore and Lady Vavasour initially conceal their unlawful love affair from the world, in Burnand’s version



Pinto publicly expresses his sentiments to his mistress, which is utterly hilarious because of its irrationality during that period even for Ouida's taste. Instead of parodying Ouida's sensual description of Lady Vavasour's appearance and Strathmore's erupting feelings, Burnand once again incorporates a new scene and makes his hero fly over a balcony to reach his lover. His focus in this scene and chapter is Pinto's obsession with Lady Regula which again can be considered an analysis and humorous amplification of Ouida's depiction and disparagement of upper class morals and relationships, lawful and unlawful. Moreover, although Burnand chooses to leave out Ouida's voluminous passages and flamboyant language, her words and similes, such as "pearly teeth", "intoxicating" and "crimson"<sup>77</sup>, as well as the image of Circe, the Greek goddess and witch who transforms men into pigs, are copied in Burnand's text. Therefore, Burnand does not only parody Ouida's plots but also maintains and imitates the writer's ideas, through the usage of the same words, writing techniques and exaggerated versions of her characters.

Burnand however, does not only parody Ouida's upper classes but also her characters of the lower classes. Below are several passages from the original text in which Folle-Farine in Ouida's novel *Folle-Farine* and Burnand's comical counterpart Itti Duffa are described. The excerpts focus on the girls's external demeanours:

(Folle-Farine) [...] was in her way beautiful, something after its fashion. She was a child of six or eight years, with limbs moulded like sculpture, and brown as the brook water; great lustrous eyes, half savage and half soft; a mouth like a red pomegranate bud, and straight dark brows, the brows of the friezes of Egypt [...] Her only clothing was a short white linen kirtle, knotted around her waist, and falling to her knees; and her skin was burned, by exposure in the sun, to a golden-brown color, though in texture it was soft as velvet, and showed all the veins like glass. The sunbeams that fell on her might find out that she had a beauty which ripened and grew rich under their warmth, like that of a red flower bud or a golden autumn

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<sup>77</sup> Ouida uses the word "crimson" seventeen times and in most of these instances she applies it to describe flowers or leaves, whereas, Burnand employs the word to depict external features, twisting thus Ouida's usage of the word.

fruit. But nothing else ever did. In none of the eyes that looked on her had she any sort of loveliness. She was Folle-Farine; a little wicked beast that only merited at best a whip and a cruel word, a broken crust and a malediction ; a thing born of the devil, and out of which the devil needed to be scourged incessantly". (Ouida, 1871: 11-12)

Yet she danced with a wondrous subtlety and intensity of ardor beyond her years; her small brown limbs glancing like bronze in the fire-glow, the sequins flashing in her flying hair, and her form flung high in air, like a bird on the wing, or a leaf on the wind; never still, never ceasing to dart, and to leap, and to whirl, and to sway, yet always with a sweet dreamy indolence, even in her fiery unrest. (61)

Itti Duffa was very pretty. To judge of her prettiness you had to look at her. No one ever denied that. She seemed as if she had lived among the flowers, and had grown like them, only not so green. Her walk was her stalk; her hands were like broad shady palms; her feet seemed as if they had just dropped off a boot-tree; each eye was a little daisy. On the First of May, she came out as a Columbine, and some shook their heads and thought her graceful, but somewhat hardy; yet when she went to dance among the village children, she stood like a wallflower. Gardeners loved her, and said she was a good sort. Her hair was like a candytuft. Her mouth was tulips. Her ears, auriclas. She was seldom seedy, and then she only suffered from a sort of spring fits, which she called 'the convolvollusses.' When unable to walk she hired a green fly. Her dress was fastened with lu-pins. (Burnand, 1878: 50)

Unlike Folle-Farine, who is a miserable and abused young girl, whom everybody considers a beautiful devil, a beast, a mule, a savage, Itti is an elegant flower and everything about her is flower-like and loveable. Burnand here parodies Ouida's constant portrayal of Folle-Farine as an untamed, miserable, sensual creature, an animal, and constructs a character that is her opposite. By doing so he seems to be commenting not only on Folle-Farine but other equally wretched and tragic characters such as Ariadne and Nello in *The Dog of Flanders*. As mentioned in the second chapter, *Folle-Farine* was considered one of Ouida's most depressing plots, if not the most depressing, and Burnand alters this. Instead of finding humour in Folle-Farine's mishaps or ridiculing them, Burnand lightens his text from this burden and Ouida's recurrent depiction of an unfortunate and ill-fated low class child.

In addition, Itti represents childish beauty and simplicity, while Folle-Farine is erotic and

dark. Burnand's version of Folle-Farine is a parody of Ouida's descriptions of unfortunate characters—who were usually girls of lower classes—and their surroundings. While Folle-Farine dances sensually at the age of six or eight, Itti stands like a wallflower, which is a homographic pun; she is not only a flower, but is also depicted as a girl who sits and does not dance or is without a dance partner. Folle-Farine is a bad sort and is whipped for it, whereas Itti, as the beautiful flower that she is, is loved by gardeners because she is a 'good sort'. While Folle-Farine is stoned and beaten, Itti throws mud, oranges and sprouts to people for no reason whatsoever. And lastly, when Folle-Farine cannot walk she is completely ignored whereas Itti hires a green fly. Burnand takes Ouida's dramatic portrayals of Folle-Farine's life and turns them into a fairy-tale-like and hilarious critique of the author's gloomy narratives. Burnand does not parody Ouida's writing style or images here, since by altering Folle-Farine's place in the novel he simply seems to be voicing his view that some of the writer's plots depicting lower class characters are terribly dismal.

Although *Strapmore* was published in 1878, the work is commented on in periodicals twenty and thirty years later, rendering both Burnand's novella and Ouida's oeuvre current topics of interest at the time. Twenty years after its first review of *Strapmore*, *The Saturday Review* discusses the work afresh:

In *Strapmore*—the delightful, the ever-green *Strapmore*—the elements of burlesque and parody are cunningly mingled. Here are the clever simulation and deft masquerade that are proper to parody. And here, also, we have that close and external study of the model as regards felicities of phrase and epithet, the art of mimicry, in short, which belongs wholly to parody. But these things are not essential to burlesque, excepting for stage representation, and some of the finest passages of burlesque in Mr. Burnand's volume are entirely independent of them. The artist in burlesque does not adhere to an oblique or perverse representation of the manner or style of his subject. Were he to do this merely, he might give a diverting caricature or skit, just as certain laborious landscape-painters give us copies of external or visual scenes that are nothing but parodies of nature. But it is in raising the spirit of the model the triumph of burlesque lies, and a strange, vexed ghost it is that haunts the pages of *Strapmore*. (SR, 1892: 752)

As we have seen Burnand recurrently shifts from parody to burlesque and in several cases copies Ouida's words and changes her characters's names to excite humour, while on other occasions, without imitating her writing, he, instead, produces his own extravagances and exaggerations, one of Ouida's fortes for some, flaws for others. Burnand's work is indeed successful because it manages to raise "the spirit of the model", to depict Ouida's attitudes, while the 'strange, vexed' ghost haunting *Strapmore*, seems to be Ouida's critical voice, indicating that a parody which does not escape or 'pervert' the original text can be an exceptional work of literature.

Moreover, almost thirty years later *Strapmore* was still being discussed. According to a reviewer in *The Academy and Literature* in 1903, a proper parody such as "Bret Harte's 'Condensed Novels' never took a moment of pleasure from the reader of the stories he burlesques. His was not verbal parody, not of the letter which kills. He took the method and produced it in a straight line till it met absurdity [...] The same may be said of Sir F. Burnand's 'Strapmore' and the man who laughed over the burlesque could go back to *Strathmore* with unimpaired emotion" (*Academy and Literature*, 1903: 513). This comment can be justified by the reviewer's opinion that there are restrictions in legitimate parody and "the first rule of the game is that no masterpiece shall be turned into verbal triviality" (*Academy and Literature*, 1903: 513). This is precisely what constitutes not only a successful parody but also a well-written burlesque after the mid-nineteenth century, since its purpose is to create innocuous amusement, rather than censure or abase the primary text. That is what Burnand accomplishes in *Strapmore*; he parodies Ouida's plots without degrading them. Indeed, revisiting Ouida's fiction after reading Burnand's comic novella will not tarnish the otherwise constructive impression of her works (not just *Strathmore*); on the contrary, it will be an avowal of her quaint, flamboyant and uncommon style.

In another article in *The Academy* published in 1878, Richard F. Littledale, "Church of

England clergyman and religious controversialist”, who “devoted himself mainly to writing”, comments on Ouida’s novel, *Friendship* (1878), and through his review *Strapmore* seems to become a reference point in discussions of Ouida (Herring, 2004). *Friendship* is considered by Littledale a nefarious and distasteful story of a married woman and her love affair, which Ouida calls a ‘friendship’, hence, the title of the novel. Most of the characters in this novel are more or less corrupt and lethargic, while partaking in illicit acts, either adultery or deceit, which evokes Ouida’s sensationalism. However, her treatment and depiction of her characters are often conflicting, shifting from discourses on morality to justifying their wickedness. Therefore, Littledale, in his attempt to analyse the story and explicate its monotony and uncouthness as he perceives it, rightly suggests that *Friendship*, just like its title, is a parody in itself:

Tedious digressions in the author’s habitual manner make the book even more offensive, by reason of the moral homilies poured out while the mess in being vigorously stirred, intended as they are to all appearance for use in vindication of the high aims and ethical purpose of the volumes. But there is a great deal more of Petronius than of Juvenal in the satire, if satire it be in virtue of the motto on the title-page. And as regards the lighter and more harmless parts of *Friendship*, the spasms and blunderings are such as to make Mr. Burnand’s *Strapmore* no parody, but a legitimate imitation, save in the one matter of decency”. (Littledale, 1878: 262)

Here, Littledale considers Ouida’s novel a parody to some extent, and that this therefore makes *Strapmore* look less like a parody than a mere imitation of her works. Accordingly, this idea contributes to my conclusions regarding *Strapmore* as not only a humorous response to Ouida’s works but also a critical one that needs to be put alongside the reviews such as Littledale’s.

It is rather interesting that Ouida, a writer who had written over twenty articles to the editor of *The Times* complaining about distortions of her works, never accused Burnand of lampooning her novels. This might be explained by the fact that Ouida herself used another form

of comedy in order to express her opinions: satire. *Folle-Farine*, *A Village Commune*, *Moths and Friendship* have all been viewed as texts containing elements of satire, in particular social and class satire<sup>78</sup>. D'Israeli recalls an incident where two "men of genius", a poet and his parodist made their acquaintance; he mentions that the poet, "the ridiculed had perceived no malignity in the playfulness of the parody, and even seemed to consider it as a compliment, aware that parodists do not waste their talent on obscure productions" (D'Israeli, 1834: 103, vol. I). Similarly, Ouida must have considered *Strapmore* a compliment since Lee, in her biography of Ouida, writes about a certain visit to London in 1886; there the author "met the Abercorns, Borthwicks, Sir John Millais, whom she frequently visited in his studio, and who made her laugh heartily on one occasion by quoting passages from Burnand's *Strapmore*" (Lee, 1914: 131). Therefore, bearing in mind Ouida's hostility towards adaptations of her works, her satirical tone in several of her novels as well as the incident Lee refers to, it can be argued that the author was rather tolerant of parodies and burlesques.

From the analysis of his novella, apart from her extravagant writing style, Burnand seemed more intrigued by Ouida's depiction of social classes in her plots, rather than her ideological stances *per se*. Hokanson argues that "For the Victorians, parody was not to be libelous and scurrilous; it became more of a moral than a political corrective" (Hokanson, 2007: 93) Indeed Burnand, in *Strapmore*, does not mock Ouida's socio-political views, as in the case of his work on Wilde published a year later. He bitterly satirised the Aesthetic movement, reinforcing Wilde's unfavourable image in his work *The Colonel* (1880) (Kingston, 2007: 44). R.

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<sup>78</sup> For comments on satire in Ouida's works see Pamela K. Gilbert's *Disease, Desire and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 12-1 and Jane Jordan's, "Ouida: How Conceptions of the Popular Reader Contributed to the Making of a Popular Novelist", In *A Return to the Common Reader: Print Culture and the Novel, 1850-1900*, Ed. Beth Palmer and Adelene Buckland. Surrey: Ashgate Ltd, 2011: 37-54.

G. G. Price asserts that Burnand and his cartoonist at *Punch*, George Du Maurier, “were equally to blame for that publication’s perpetual stereotyping of contemporary art, artists, and aesthetes like Wilde” (45). Indeed, Hokanson writes that “Victorian parody as the century waned began to return to its more caustic roots”, which can explain Burnand’s mild tone in *Strapmore* (Hokanson, 2007: 97). However, through *Strapmore* one could suggest that Burnand possibly not only enjoyed and respected Ouida’s writing but also the fact that he neither attacks nor harshly criticises her works could be seen as an advocacy of Ouida’s ideologies concerning the upper classes and lower classes,—as that is what he mainly parodies. Finally, it seems that nineteenth century critics did not touch upon the fact that Burnand’s parody is a parody simply because he has amusingly changed certain names and scenes and has added his own fictional extravagances to the plot.

## Abuse, Mania and Confinement in *Folle-Farine*

The focus of this chapter will be Ouida's novel *Folle-Farine* (1871) and the writer's 'deviating' version of the anticipated repercussions arisen from female subjugation. *Folle-Farine* connotes a turning point in Ouida's three-decker writing which until then, consisted mainly of military and high society fiction. Earlier novels such as *Strathmore*, cannot be described as feminist since she focuses on impossibly wealthy and haughty male aristocrats, whereas in *Folle-Farine* Ouida implicitly comments on the role of women in society. Considered an extremely pessimistic work of literature, *Folle-Farine* demonstrates Ouida's social anxieties and her increasing interest in the disparity between classes and genders.

Folle-Farine, a dark-skinned outcast of exotic and foreign beauty, is the protagonist of the novel and this analysis. She is the illegitimate child of a gypsy and French peasant girl, who dies after childbirth. Her name literally means dust and connotes the contemptibility with which characters treated her. At the age of six Folle-Farine is taken secretly by Taric a gypsy travelling who saves her from her father before he sells her as a dancer or prostitute. Taric leaves her at the threshold of Flamma's house, her grandfather, in a Norman village, a place that marks Folle-Farine's first encounter with malice and torture. There she is faced with her grandfather's sadistic wrath and shame for his daughter's unhallowed liaison. Flamma, a devout and dogmatic man, deems her labour skills useful and unabashedly reduces her to a slave. Folle-Farine endures his and the villagers's contempt, battering and flagellation. However, she manages to end her grandfather's abuse when she falls unrequitedly in love with Arslàn, a Norwegian painter. Her



beloved is at the point of starvation when they make their acquaintance and she anonymously helps him by stealing food from her grandfather, a deed which she never dares commit to cope with her own daily malnourishment.

To promote the artwork of the man she loves, Folle-Farine makes an exchange with Prince Sartorian and trades several coins for money, which to Sartorian's knowledge are worthless. She then offers the money to Arslàn so he can travel to Paris and practice his art. He is utterly offended and categorically refuses to keep it. Folle-Farine, embittered by his reaction, makes another pact with Sartorian, this time without an exchange on Folle-Farine's part. He offers to buy a painting of Arslàn's, depicting Folle-Farine, a private deal that the painter is unaware of. Arslàn, now, having earned a substantial amount, is determined to go to Paris and practise his art there, in hope of being distinguished. Folle-Farine meets with him to bid farewell and he secretly places some money in her clothes. The girl, extremely affronted, decides to travel alone to Paris to return the money he endowed to her. During her journey, villagers capture her and place her in prison believing that because of the money she carries, she is a thief. In the village, she is placed in the same cell with her father and is driven into a catatonic and feverish state. Not knowing what to do with her, the villagers leave her under the care of a "sisterhood of mercy", a hospital that used to be "an ancient palace" with "innumerable chambers" and "vast corridors" (413). Realising that she is harmless when she recovers, the villagers set her free and she resumes her journey to Paris. After a sequence of courtship and gift offerings, by the wealthy and manipulative Prince Sartorian, and several attempts to keep her in his palace, Folle-Farine yields. She literally and clandestinely trades her body for Arslàn's sake and becomes Sartorian's mistress, the 'princess' of his palace. Once Arslàn has become famous and rich, Folle-Farine returns to her birthplace and haven, nature, and there she mysteriously passes away. The novel

ends with another desecration of Folle-Farine's body; certain passers-by strip her naked corpse to steal her clothes and belongings.

As mentioned in previous chapters, analytical scrutiny of Ouida's novels is scant, especially that of her early novels, such as *Folle-Farine*. Through the critical analysis of motifs such as abuse, monomania and confinement and the novel's comparison to canonical texts such as Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Gaskell's *Ruth*, Ouida's increasing social anxieties regarding the inequality between classes and genders will become evident. While Ouida bids the reader to interpret conventional topics such as exploitation, self-sacrifice/self-denial, incarceration and madness as images of women's position in society, she is also preoccupied with Folle-Farine's social surroundings that pave the path to her ruin—unlike Brontë and Gaskell, who emphasise the catastrophic ramifications that moral norms and restraints have upon the actions of their female characters. Since Ouida was writing at a time when girls and women were endeavouring to flee from their own 'gothic castle', either that of wedlock, prostitution or abuse, and gain their independence from patriarchal figures and the ideal of the 'angel in the house', Ouida's evocation and employment of mid-nineteenth century literary conventions in *Folle-Farine* is also vital to the topic she addresses. As Schaffer states, the "Gothic home, the dark archaic twin of Ruskin's 'place of peace' is central for aesthetic women [writers]" (Schaffer, 2000: 130). This setting is essential to Ouida since through it she depicts a woman of the lower classes, incarcerated in a patriarchal milieu, in which she wilfully resides and accepts its unpleasant inhabitants, but nonetheless remains apathetic towards social and moral norms. Specifically, this chapter will scrutinise Ouida's dismal locale, her heroine and her villains in an attempt to depict the novel's differentiation from certain canonical texts of the same period, which led to its subsequent marginalisation.

This disregard however can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century when the novel was met with primarily unimpressed and disapproving critiques. The year *Folle-Farine* was published four reviews were written about the novel. *Folle-Farine* was Ouida's third three-decker volume, printed before she acquired fame which explains the small number of reviews published on its behalf. Three of the four reviews dedicated an article to Ouida's novel, which is lengthy if one considers that new novels were usually placed with other recent ones under the category 'New Novels', 'Novels of The Week' or 'Recent Novels'. This might have marked the beginning of controversy *a propos* Ouida's fiction.

The first article can be found in the *Athenaeum* (1828-1921), a weekly journal which by the 1840's "had become one of the most influential papers of its day" (Brake, 2009: 26)<sup>79</sup>. After 1869 the new editor sought to employ "expert" female writers such as Augusta Webster, Vernon Lee, Edith Nesbit, while the well-known male reviewers included Andrew Lang, George Saintsbury, W.M. Rossetti (26)<sup>80</sup>. The reviewer begins his discussion about the novel by quoting legendary mathematician and professor who after reading John Milton's *Paradise Lost* exclaimed "What does it prove?"<sup>81</sup>. The reviewer believes that Ouida's unrealistic plot would have rendered the mathematician senseless and incapable of forming any questions. While narrating a summary of the novel the reviewer comments on Arslàn's and Folle-Farine's discussions about Greek mythology death and life:

When her tragic life is at its gloomiest, she meets with a famished artist, who walks on romantic stilts that lift him into clouds, and the two together, Folle-Farine and Arslàn (whose births have close similarity of

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<sup>79</sup> After seventy-three years, the periodical was published monthly.

<sup>80</sup> George Saintsbury (1845-1933) will later come to write reviews of several of Ouida's novel, after she becomes famous.

<sup>81</sup> The mathematician's actual words were: "Beautiful!", "why, it's all assertion—the fellow does not prove anything from beginning to end". See "The Confessions of a Cantab", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 16: 90 (July-December, 1824): 465.

circumstance), discourse upon death, life, mythology in general, and the Greek gods in particular, with a profundity so alarmingly unintelligible that minds freighted with ordinary common sense may be exposed to great peril by trying to fathom it. (*Athenaeum*, 1871: 234)

This remark is rather ironic and, as seen in the reviews concerning Strathmore and in later reviews of other novels, Ouida's writing was frequently considered to be exaggerative and flamboyant. However, Folle-Farine and Arslàn's backgrounds are not similar as the reviewer supposes them to be and neither do they talk 'together' about these topics: the form of their conversation is that of questions and answers. Arslàn's mother was an artist as well, a singer while his grandfather "[...] reared him tenderly and wisely; and braced him with a scholar's lore and with a mountaineer's exposure, so that both brain and body had their due (Ouida, 1883: 203). Therefore, the painter's descriptions, although romanticised, do not necessarily lack credibility or depth and 'harm' the 'common' reader. In addition, Folle-Farine's ignorance and absence in this discussion is more than obvious: "She did not understand him; but she felt that she was honoured by him, and not scorned as others scorned her, for being thus unlike humanity (274).

The reviewer continues the article by commenting on the novel's banality: "There is an utter lack of originality in the characters, and of novelty in the reflections and speculations, except, perhaps, where the latter are incomprehensible to us, but in which very penetrating intelligences may discover something that may be both new and profound" (*Athenaeum*, 1871: 234). The writer is again mocking Ouida's style by implying that, if there is something momentous about her writing, 'common' people cannot perceive it; only "penetrating intelligences" possess this privilege. At the end of the article, however the reviewer considers Folle-Farine to be "the most miserable heroine in fiction and reality" which contradicts his notion of unoriginality permeating the novel (*Athenaeum*, 1871: 234).

The reviewer implicitly affiliates Ouida with realism and French novelists, as well as romance, compares Folle-Farine to bold and unruly female characters of French Literature such as Honoré de Balzac's Mignon in *Modeste Mignon* (1844), George Sand's Fadette in *La Petite Fadette* (1849) and Sir Walter Scott's altruistic characters Fenella in *Peveril of the Peak* (1823) and Jeanie Deans in *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818). However, unlike Scott's novels "in which character, and life, and adventure are so mingled in a whole, that we can scarce tell which of them charms us most", according to Andrew Lang, Ouida's "best" faculty is scene painting, in which the reviewer again perceives her style as overwhelming and her imagery heaped (Lang, 1887: 693 and *Athenaeum*, 1871: 234). However, the reviewer's comment that Folle-Farine is the most miserable character in fiction and reality seems to come more into alignment with Lang's discussion of the pessimistic style of realist fiction. At the end of the article the reviewer attacks to attack Ouida's depiction of Christianity and the Church:

For the moral of 'Folle Farine' we look in vain. We do not know of the author means as much, but the teaching of the story seems to us to tend to show that Christianity as a Religion of Love is an abominable sham. We do not see that free gipsy life, as it is here manifested, produces anything purer or more elevated. Ouidà paints the Christian people in this novel as being in no degree above sheer rascality [...] The author of 'Folle Farine' should leave religious speculations alone. (264)

The reviewer's analysis of the novel is rather climactic since at the beginning it does not use pronouns such as 'I' or 'we' to express an opinion; whereas towards the end, when Ouida's implicit commentary of Christianity is referred to, suddenly the reviewer becomes 'we', as if a representative of all readers. This quote is a synopsis of the extent in which, according to the article, Ouida's novel is saturated with improbable immorality.

The next review was written in *The Graphic* in which the reviewer focuses mainly on the pessimism surrounding Ouida's novel and the impossibility of her plot: "It is impossible to believe in such a monster as Claudis Flamma without much stronger motives as regards his

grand-daughter than are here alleged—the flight of her mother from his house, and the subsequent commitment to his care, in return, of her gipsy offspring” (*The Graphic*, 1871: 2). However, an amalgam of the sentiments of shame, religious fanaticism and sadism, can indisputably engender a “monster”. Although it is true that the reader knows nothing about Claudis’s own childhood or life before he is married, he is depicted as puritanical and stringent, a man who despises Folle-Farine but had cherished her mother, which conveys his volatility and perversion.

The reviewer can only imagine “such atrocities” taking “place somewhere beyond the bounds of civilisation” which perhaps can be juxtaposed with Ouida’s depictions of the ignorance or apathy of the upper classes concerning the vulgarity of lower ones (299). The review continues: “The means by which this is brought about (Folle-Farine’s “crowning catastrophe”)—and indeed all the later scenes of the story—are consistently untrue to reality; while the coarse sensuousness and cruel cynicism which pervade these pages from beginning to end, are repulsive in the extreme” (299). If one compares *Strathmore* to *Folle-Farine*, the latter’s shocking effect to the reviewer and possible readers of the late nineteenth century is to a certain extent explicable; from Lady Marion’s captivating sensuality and derision, Ouida shifts to a plot abundant with ‘coarse sensuousness and cruel cynicism’. A critique on this alteration in Ouida’s style and writing is also discussed in the review: “It is greatly to be regretted, too, that an author like Ouida should have marred the effect of much powerful and eloquent writing by inculcating—by implication, at any rate—a system of theology which is indescribable without offence, but may be summed up in a formula that whatever *is* is wrong” (emphasis added) (299). Again Ouida’s polemics towards Christianity and the Church are censured, as well as her depiction of a world brimming with sin and wickedness.

Another review of the novel was published in October by the *Saturday Review*, a weekly paper founded in 1855. The paper according to *The Encyclopedia of the British Press, 1422–1992* was somewhat conservative and had a certain agenda for their contributors: “Liberals to write on matters where they were most conservative, and the Conservatives on topics which they could treat liberally” (*The Encyclopedia*, 1992: 168). The review concentrates mainly on Ouida’s writing and argues that it is ranting and wordy: “[...] till we read *Folle-Farine* we did not know that there is a wordiness beyond even that of a preacher, and a rant beyond even that of a Special Correspondent of the paper that has the largest circulation in the world. There is a full and even flow of rant that, kept up as it is through three long volumes, excites in our minds a feeling of amazement” (*SR*, 1871: 470). The reviewer is very caustic and, unlike the previous reviews that perceived Ouida’s work as depressing and monotonous, the *Saturday Review* seems to consider *Folle-Farine* a novel written by a passionate writer, but equally repetitive and overblown. The review continues in a similarly ironic manner:

[...] we have here a writer whose flow of words is such that, apparently without any effort on her part, she is hurried along by them with a fulness (sic) of sound and an entire absence of any meaning through nearly one thousand pages. Astonishing as it is that any one person can be found capable of writing this stuff, still more astonishing is it that any one person can be found capable of reading it when written. It would, we should have thought, have been something remarkable if the same age had produced one such writer and one such reader. We could have conceived that at least a thousand years might have passed by before there came into the world any one whose mind was strangely enough constituted to care to read what Ouida had written. But from the title-page we learn that this author with the outlandish name, and of doubtful gender, has written so much that we may feel assured that *she* (for we take a chance shot at the gender) can boast of a large set of readers. We can scarcely understand, however, how any one can be found to delight in mere rant; at all events for a long time together. We should be curious to come across one of Ouida’s readers, and by examination to ascertain what had been *his* previous course of reading. (emphasis added) (470)

The reviewer is condescending and offensive in attacking readers who enjoyed Ouida’s works, especially if one considers that the writer was admired and read by many distinguished writers as

mentioned in previous chapters. Specifically Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote Ouida an eight-page letter of praise on the publication of *Folle-Farine* according to the author's first biography by Elizabeth Lee (Lee, 1914: 58). Moreover, the reviewer's assumption that Ouida is a woman and certainty that all readers of literature are men, indicative by the switch from 'we' to 'his', exemplifies a biased reviewer.

The review ends with references to Ouida's education, which, it is claimed, is lacking in mythological material and knowledge of the laws of nature: "She has a certain command over French, derived no doubt from Florian. [...] She is extremely fond of illustrations and parables, and as her ignorance of Biblical history, political economy, language, and everything else, she is forced to trust to her imagination for her facts (*SR*, 1871: 470-471). The examples given by the reviewer, concerning Ouida's lack of knowledge, are only two; the supposed inaccuracy could be explained as a metaphor or an exaggeration on Ouida's part, or simply a dearth of the expertise of a historian, traveller or scientist. Furthermore, Ouida's command of the French language can be traced to her father, Louis Rame. Rame was a Frenchman "who taught his native tongue in different schools in the town" and in a letter written a year before her death she writes: "I identify myself with my father's French race and blood", which accounts for Ouida's fine handling of the language rather than the eighteenth century romance author Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (Lee, 1914: 14, 28). As for mythology, it is scarcely employed in *Folle-Farine*. Because mythology is not Ouida's main preoccupations in this novel—or her previous ones for that matter—might excuse her alleged mythological inaccuracies, which are, nevertheless, perfected in *In Maremma*.

Lastly, *The Examiner*, a radical weekly journal, publishes a somewhat different review of *Folle-Farine*. The review argues that Ouida's novel is a parable, an allegory, which although



“monotonously sad”, at times is justifiable since “less painful treatment would have failed to bring out the lesson which the authoress desires to enforce” (*The Examiner*, 1871: 896). This article is somewhat a feminist reading of the novel and unlike the reviewer of the *Athenaeum*, this reviewer here discerns a moral in Ouida’s work:

To show how Folle-Farine is made the sport of the cruelties of the world, and how she triumphs over them, to show, in her story, how unjust, is the treatment which women too often receive from men, and how great is the need of a revolution which will release both men and women from the tyranny of old traditions, and of ever-new falsehoods, is the purpose of Ouida’s work. (897)

The reviewer here ponders about gender inequalities and the conservatism of contemporary society and renders Ouida’s novel simply a commentary of these matters. The writer of the article claims that although it would not affect the reader’s interest in the novel, it will not be summarised—a common practice in most reviews of Ouida’s new works—possibly to sustain readers’ curiosity concerning, not only the plot, but also whether or not it is hyperbolic or merely realistic.

Strangely, enough the reviewer admits that Folle-Farine’s life is an exaggeration but justifies his view and Ouida’s narrative by arguing that it is just an “exaggerated type of many lives” (879). The article emphasises that Ouida’s intention when writing *Folle-Farine* was lucid and unambiguous:

That purpose may, doubtless, offend some, but it is an honest purpose, and ‘Folle-Farine’ can only open its readers’ eyes to facts that exist, that ought to not exist, yet which cannot cease to exist so long as they are cloaked over and ignored. No women have to suffer so much as Folle-Farine is made to do; few women would be able to triumph over circumstances, by self-sacrifice, as Folle-Farine does. But many have to suffer, many are made slaves of cruelty and lust; and, until the world learns to do them justice, until “sweeter manners, purer laws” are established in their favour, the world will suffer by all the hardships which it inflicts on them”. (879)

As ‘honest’ as it may have been, Ouida’s plot still caused a stir about issues that were tactfully addressed and disregarded. This quote is the closing paragraph of the article and the reviewer’s fervent and possibly unprecedented admiration of Ouida’s novel, her objective in unveiling the masked problems of society and her personal discontent of its callousness and gender disparities, is explicitly addressed and acclaimed.

An analogous approach with regard to gender issues is depicted in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (1979), a ground-breaking work in gender and feminist readings of literature. It was one of the first works that viewed the fiction in question as a response to gender concerns and relations. This text discusses the restraint inflicted on women writers of the nineteenth century which made them portray their oppression through fictional female characters and their fathers, brothers, suitors or lovers. Their work is named after a character from Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, the insane Bertha Mason, the so-called madwoman in the attic. For Gilbert and Gubar, Jane and Bertha represent the “angel” and “the demon”, the two social categories into which women are divided in a patriarchal society, the ideal virtuous female figure and the scorned one. Their primary focus is the changes in gender relations that occur in nineteenth century texts, such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Specifically, they argue that Jane and Catherine are restrained by society and its expectations of women’s conduct, a position in which many fictional heroines of the period find themselves. According to Gilbert and Gubar, the female protagonist is faced with certain choices due to patriarchal norms. Catherine, for example, leaves *Wuthering Heights* and the socially inferior Heathcliff, whom she loves. After she has been transformed into a polite, reserved, and delicate woman, as a proper lady should be, Catherine resides at Thrushcross Grange, where she marries her socially equal Edgar. Similarly, Jane refuses to elope

with the married Mr. Rochester because society would deem her behaviour morally inappropriate. This is precisely what Gilbert and Gubar call the “social disease of ladyhood”, the rules of conduct taught from one woman to another to comply with men’s expectations (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 280). This is a disease that strips a woman of her independence: a fate that can be assigned to many other nineteenth century female figures, such as Ruth and, to a certain extent, Folle-Farine.

One of the ‘diseases’ Gilbert and Gubar examine is that of self-starvation, which is endemic in Ouida’s novel: “[...] self-starvation or anorexia nervosa, masochism, and suicide form a complex of psychoneurotic symptoms that is almost classically associated with female feelings of powerlessness and rage. Certainly the ‘hunger strike’ is a traditional tool of the powerless, as the history of the feminist movement (and many other movements of oppressed peoples) will attest” (64). Catherine refuses to eat on several occasions and her anorectic body—which exemplifies not only her weakness and the suppressed anger she feels in her new household, but also her depression and misery—can be compared to her youthful health: “Catherine had reached her full height; her figure was both plump and slender, elastic as steel, and her whole aspect sparkling with health and spirits” (Brontë, 2003: 216). Whereas years later at Thrushcross Grange:

Mrs Linton sat in a loose, white dress, with a light shawl over her shoulders, in the recess of the open window, as usual. Her thick, long hair had been partly removed at the beginning of her illness; and now, she wore it simply combed in its natural tresses over her temples and neck [...] Her present countenance had a wild vindictiveness in its white cheek, and a bloodless lip, and scintillating eye. (158-160)

In Catherine’s deterioration, her ‘powerlessness’, the only unscathed feature are her eyes, which, however, hint the change in character expressed by the intermittent outbursts of ‘rage’; while

“her eyes sparkled joyfully” as a child, her now ‘scintillating eye’, not eyes, as well as her “flashing” eyes in fits of frenzy, exhibit much more than a state of melancholy (53, 118).

On the contrary, Folle-Farine’s self-starvation begins as a reaction to Flamma’s beatings, either out of pride, exhaustion or, as Gilbert and Gubar indicate, rage. The girl refrains from eating in several instances, so, unlike Catherine, Folle-Farine’s self-starvation becomes an altruistic undertaking:

He (the old man Marcellin, one of Folle-Farine’s only friends) broke off half his dry bread and tendered it to her. She shook her head and motioned it away; yet she was as hungered as any hawk that has hunted all through the night and the woods, and has killed nothing. The growing life, the superb strength, the lofty stature of her made her need constant nourishment, as young trees need it; and she was fed as scantily as a blind beggar’s dog, and less willingly than a galley slave. The kindly air had fed her richly, strongly, continually; that was all. (66)

Nourishment is no longer a need for Folle-Farine given that she has the ‘strength’, the power to endure it. Concerning Gilbert and Gubar, while this anomaly is indeed a symptom of mild psychoneurosis and a product of patriarchy, it does not result in ‘powerlessness’ in Folle-Farine’s case. This is also evident when she again starves herself for Arslàn and her self-starvation seems to come naturally to her:

She went hardily, fearlessly, her mind once set upon the errand. She did not reason with herself, as more timorous creatures might have done, that being half starved, and paid not at all, as recompense for strong and continual labour, she was but about to take a just due withheld, a fair wage long overdue. She only resolved to take what another needed by a violence which she had never employed to serve her own needs, and having resolved went to execute her resolution with the unhesitating dauntlessness that was bred in her, flesh and bone [...] She would have starved ere she would have told him that she hungered. She would have perished by the roadside ere ever she would have cried to him that she was homeless. She would have been torn asunder for a meal by wolves ere she would have bought safety or succour by one coin of that gold he had slid in her bosom, like the wages of a thing that was vile. (175, 389)

In the first excerpt Folle-Farine, though aware that she might be beaten to death, steals food from Flamma's stock, which she has never attempted for herself during those nights of excessive fatigue and hunger. Although she can steal a loaf of bread or keep one of her golden coins to buy food, the need to safeguard Arslàn's well-being empowers her. Therefore, while her self-abandonment is a form of neurosis, her obsession with Arslàn is a much graver one given that it sustains and eventually heightens her other complexes.

Like Bertha, Folle-Farine exhibits signs of hysteria that are not restricted to the self-starvation and self-abasement she submitted herself to as a child, but also are seen when she is in a catatonic state and is incarcerated in a hospital run by nuns. The ramifications of her father's abuse and abandonment, and her grandfather's sadism, are depicted through her mental submission to Arslàn and her physical incarceration by Sartorian. Implicitly, these two men are as manipulative as her grandfather; however, instead of a whip, one uses his voyeuristic art to control Folle-Farine, while the other resorts to his money to manoeuvre her into sexually surrendering herself to him. Folle-Farine is surrounded by patriarchal figures who control her and render her incapable of unremitting resistance. Schaffer states that "The Gothic was a useful genre for Ouida, because built into the structure of the Gothic itself is a profound ambivalence about female behaviour" (Schaffer, 2000: 127). This ambivalence—which is present in the majority of Ouida's novels that concentrate on female victims—is the power demonstrated through passivity and during an incarceration. Folle-Farine never attempts to run away from Flamma and his abusive behaviour, but she often resorts to actions she knows she will be punished for and eventually frees herself from him when she deems it desirable. Ouida adopts the theme of female incarceration found in Gothic fiction and weds it to that of mental 'confinement', which women underwent in mid and late nineteenth century novels. However,

Folle-Farine is neither unwillingly confined, as the female gothic, nor is she constrained by social morality, as the fictional woman that Gubar and Gilbert consider. She voluntarily endures emotional and physical confinement merely on account of her private sentiments which elicits a monomania: to see Arslàn happy.

Folle-Farine's love for Arslàn is an abnormal, pathological state of mind, and her struggle, to make him famous and content with life is in a sense a monomaniacal obsession. In 1837 the *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* writes:

Monomania is the form in which mental disease most frequently appears. It is with monomaniacs that our lunatic asylums are filled; and it is to this form of insanity, therefore, in all its varieties, that the chief attention of medical men and of society is directed [...] The subject is one in which every human being must take an interest, and not the less so, we imagine, from the startling fact, which the statistical reports (to be afterwards noticed) on the subject point out, that insanity is increasing in frequency, and indeed advancing step for step with the general improvement and civilisation of the human race! (*CEJ*, 1837: 307-308)

The man who coined, around 1810, the term monomania, or partial insanity, in psychiatry—the word deriving from the Greek word one (μόνος) and obsession (μανία)—was French psychiatrist Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol. According to Michel Foucault, “[...] in an inevitably mechanistic manner, Esquirol made monomania a species of ‘*mal du siècle*’ due to the development of the intellectual faculties and more generally to the ‘state of society’ (Foucault, 1975: 277). What Foucault is referring to here is Esquirol's opinion concerning the shift in causes of mental diseases towards the end of the eighteenth century: leaving behind intense religious concerns, people become more preoccupied and anxious about political and ethical issues.

According to Sally Mitchel in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, insanity in the early Victorian era was classified into two categories, mania and melancholia, and although physical causes were probable, these aberrations were mainly viewed as moral:

Generally, the causes of insanity were categorized as physical or moral, with a further breakdown into predisposing and exciting causes within each category. These categories were not mutually exclusive. Physical predisposing causes included hereditary madness, irregular blood circulation, poor blood, old age, and *female gender*. Physical exciting causes included blows to the head, accidents, sunstroke, alcoholism, phases of the moon, and masturbation. Moral predisposing causes included dissipation, debauchery, and excesses of one kind or another [...] The Victorian public was warned about the especial dangers of gluttony and overindulgence in working, studying, and novel-reading. Moral exciting causes included nervous shocks, disappointments in love, rape, and masturbation [...] Women who did not conform to the Victorian ideals of femininity could be and occasionally were diagnosed as insane. Rebellious daughters and recalcitrant wives could be readily brought to obedience by the very threat of confinement since it was popularly accepted that the female reproductive system rendered women peculiarly susceptible to insanity. (Mitchell, 2012: 398)

The phrase ‘moral predisposing causes’ refers to social morality, which was the main concern of the early years of the Victorian era, whereas the ‘moral exciting causes’ indicate psychological and psychosomatic issues. Although condemned by her ‘female gender’, Folle-Farine’s mental instability is most likely rooted in a ‘moral exciting cause’, specifically ‘disappointment in love’, not only in the absence of Arslàn’s love but also of her father’s and grandfather’s. Although she sustains severe abuse throughout her childhood, Ouida does not depict her obsession and fits as ramifications of physical harm.

Similarly Elaine Showalter notes that “not only moral insanity but also such traditional categories of madness as mania, dementia, and melancholia might be brought on by moral causes” (Showalter, 1987: 29). She explains that by the term moral causes most doctors referred to intense emotions and psychological stress. Showalter also discusses Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* (1853) and comments on the fact that only when the protagonist Lucy Snowe “finds the

assurance that she is loved—along with rewarding work—is Lucy no longer sick and concludes that “Bronte provides the sophisticated understanding of women's complex emotional needs” (71). In a similar vein Ouida portrays Folle-Farine as a child in need of love and assurance, and since she is never ‘rewarded’ for her sacrifices, she is never really ‘cured’ from her psychological maladies and thus is overwhelmed by her love for Arslàn.

According to Mitchell, only as the century proceeded—along with the introduction of the Lunacy Act of 1845 which viewed the mentally ill as patients—was insanity considered chiefly a medical issue rather than a moral one and was thereafter divided into four categories: melancholia or monomania, mania, partial insanity and moral insanity (398)<sup>82</sup>. During the same year, Esquirol wrote *Mental Maladies; a Treatise on Insanity*, in which the various types of mania are described meticulously for the first time<sup>83</sup>. Ouida places Folle-Farine’s obsession in the category of erotic monomania, or erotomania, which should not be confused with the sexual disorders of nymphomania (for women) and satyriasis (for men). Interestingly, Esquirol’s research suggests that suicide is one of erotomania’s terminations while “in some cases, marriage (is) almost the only remedy” (Esquirol, 1845: 319). Folle-Farine, Catherine, and even Heathcliff, who according to Nelly “might have had a monomania on the subject of his departed idol”, do not succeed in overcoming their obsessions by committing suicide or entering into wedlock due to their excessive pride in different matters of life (Brontë, 2003: 324). As will be discussed below, Folle-Farine patiently awaits Thanatos to end her life rather than contemplating suicide, while, Catherine and Heathcliff, rather unsuccessfully, marry other characters to suppress their obsession with each other.

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<sup>82</sup> The use of ‘moral’ here, as opposed to medical/physical, refers to both ethos and psychology.

<sup>83</sup> *Folle-Farine* is not set in Great Britain, as is the case with many of Ouida’s novels. Since she was not yet famous, her readership would have been mainly British, thus she might have expected her Anglophone audience to remember the Lunacy Act as well as Esquirol’s findings.



In particular, Folle-Farine's monomania is vehemently portrayed when amidst the solitude of the forest she embraces her sacrifice:

She only thought of those great and noble fruits of a man's genius which she had given up all to save; she only thought ceaselessly, in the *sickness of her heart*, "Will he forget?—forget quite—when he is free?" [...] That brief *delirious trance* of joy that had come to her with the setting of the last day's sun, had with the sun sunk away. The visions which had haunted her sleep under the thorn-tree whilst the thrush sang, had been killed under the cold and bitterness of the waking world. She wondered, while her face grew red with shame, what she had been *mad* enough to dream of in that sweet, cruel slumber. For him—she felt that sooner than again look upward to his eyes she would die by a thousand deaths. What was she to him?—a barbarous, worthless, and unlovely thing, whose very service was despised, whose very sacrifice was condemned. "I would live as a leper all the days of my life, if, first, I might be fair in his sight one hour!" she thought; and she was unconscious of horror or of impiety in the ghastly desire, because she had but one religion, this—her love. (emphasis added) (Ouida, 1883: 375, 380-381)

Folle-Farine's deems herself mad for fantasising about a life with Arslàn, symptomatic of her 'ailment', which evidently is not affiliated with Gilbert and Gubar's social disease of ladyhood. As mentioned previously, Folle-Farine's monomania is a product of the putative norms of patriarchy, and she remains an outsider, an "outcast", since she does not conform to them in the way Catherine and Ruth do (411). Ouida does not seem to be preoccupied with Folle-Farine's morality and the girl is imprisoned merely because she is considered to be a thief and psychologically disturbed. Although, her 'mad' dream to be with Arslàn frees her from her emotional bondage to Flamma, her infatuation with the painter is described here as sharp and excessively euphoric, again indicative of mental disorder. Ouida merely portrays, through Folle-Farine the injurious and psychological ramifications of her trauma, a girl who, 'sickened' by a patriarchal society, finds comfort in the object of her monomania.

Folle-Farine's first mental collapse is triggered by the encounter with her distraught father, with whom she unknowingly and uncannily shares a prison-cell:

There he lay delirious—a madman chained there at her feet, so close in the little den, that, shrink as she would against the wall, she could barely keep from the touch of his hands as they were flung forth in the air, from the scorch of his breath as he raved and cursed. And there was no light except the fire in his eyes; except the flicker of the moonbeam through the leaves. She spent her strength in piteous shrieks. They were the first cries that had ever broken from her lips for human aid; and they were vain. The guard above slept heavy with brandy and a dotard's dreams. The village was not aroused. What cared any of its sleepers how these outcasts fared? She crouched in the farthest corner, when her voice had spent itself in the passion of appeal. The night—would it ever end? Beside its horror, all the wretchedness and bondage of her old life seemed like peace and freedom. Writhing in pain and frenzy, the wounded drunkard struck her—all unconscious of the blow—across her eyes, and fell, contorted and senseless, with his head upon her knees. He had ceased to shout his amorous songs, and vaunt his lustful triumphs. His voice was hollow in his throat, and babbled with a strange sound, low and fast and inarticulate [...] When, at daylight, the people unbarred the prison-door, they found the sightless face of the dead man lying full in the light of the sun: beside him the girl crouched with a senseless stare in the horror of her eyes, and on her lips a ghastly laugh. For Folle-Farine had entered at last into her Father's kingdom. (411-412)

This scene exhibits the peak of Folle-Farine's suffering and is a synopsis of all that has tormented her. After endless abuse by Flamma, Folle-Farine, now in a prison cell, is strangely nostalgic of her life in the Norman town and shrieks for the first time, connoting a change, a deterioration in her mental state. Ouida does not portray here the girl's instability as hereditary or the result of physical abuse; rather, she depicts Folle-Farine's state as a consequence of emotional decay: "When they had found her in the cell of the guardhouse, she was far beyond any reach of harm from them, or any sensibility of the worst which they might do to her. She was in a delirious stupor, which left her no more sense of place, or sound, or time than if her brain had been drugged to the agonies and ecstasies of the opium-eater" (413). It is in this moment that Folle-Farine actually enters her father's kingdom, joins him in madness and sustains a nervous shock, another 'moral exciting cause'.

After Folle-Farine's mental breakdown she is transferred to a hospital which again is "an ancient palace, whose innumerable chambers and whose vast corridors had been given to a sisterhood of mercy, and employed for nigh a century as a public hospital", thus intensifying the

theme of confinement (413). Unlike Catherine who would have “violent dispositions” and had been “struck during a tempest of passion with a kind of fit. That’s her account, at least; for she flew off in the height of it, and locked herself up”, Folle-Farine’s decline is vividly described (Brontë, 2003: 130):

FOR many months she knew nothing of the flight of time. All she was conscious of were burning intolerable pain, continual thirst, and the presence as of an iron hand upon her head, weighing down the imprisoned brain. All she saw in the horrible darkness, which no ray of light ever broke, was the face of Thanatos, with the white rose pressed against his mouth, to whom endlessly she stretched her arms in vain entreaty, but who said only, with the passionless pity of his gaze, ‘I come in my own time, and neither tarry nor hasten for any supplication of a mortal creature’. (Ouida, 1883: 412)

Folle-Farine’s paroxysm is accompanied by a hallucination, in which she implores Thanatos to take her. This scene emphasises her unwillingness to commit suicide and Ouida’s depiction of a woman who struggles internally and has not utterly surrendered herself to her miserable life, as in the case of Catherine. In this ‘prison’ Folle-Farine lies without any sense of the passing of hours and days and months:

The old gods are not dead; they only wait—they only wait! I am theirs—theirs! They forget, perhaps. But I remember. I keep my faith; they must keep theirs, for shame’s sake. Heaven or hell? what does it matter? Can it matter to me, so that he has his desire? And that they must give, or break faith, as men do. Persephone ate the pomegranate,—you know—and she went back to hell. So will I—if they will it. What can it matter how the reed dies?—by fire, by steel, by storm?—what matter, so that the earth hear the music? Ah, God! the reed was found worthy to die!—And I—I am too vile, too poor, too shameful even for *that!*” And then her voice would rise in a passion of hysteric weeping, or sink away into the feeble wailing of the brain, mortally stricken, and yet dimly sensible of its own madness and weakness; and all through the hours she, in her unconsciousness, would lament for this—for this alone—that the gods had not deemed her worthy of the stroke of death by which, through her, a divine melody might have arisen, and saved the world. (413-414)

Her rant is indicative of her mental state, and her monomaniacal urge to please Arslàn is unveiled in its extreme. She considers herself the reed that will bring music to the earth, the

person who will reveal Arslàn's talent to the world. Now addressing the old gods, Folle-Farine entreats them to take her life since her sole purpose is for Arslàn to succeed in his art and with her death 'a divine melody might have arisen, and saved the world'. Folle-Farine's outburst only conveys her anomalous love for Arslàn, but also exposes the excess of her self-sacrifice.

These critical approaches suggest ambivalence in female conduct, which will be seen through Folle-Farine, and in demonstration of opposing attitudes such as resistance and acquiescence. The girl chooses to stay with Flamma since as a child, ignorant of life, he has moulded her thoughts, while, she has taken for granted that inhumane labour is her gender's duty and flagellation, the repercussion of failing its completion:

His instinct told him that this nameless, dumb, captive, desert animal, which he had bound as a beast of burden to his millwheels, had in some manner learned her strength, and would not long remain content to be thus yoked and driven. He had blinded her with the blindness of ignorance, and goaded her with the goad of ignominy; but for all that, some way her bandaged eyes had sought and found the light, some way her numbed hide had thrilled and swerved beneath the barb. (259-260)

Even Arslàn who is gentle and respectful towards Folle-Farine has a traditional opinion about women: "All women have a god; that is why they are at once so much weaker and so much happier than men.' 'Who are their gods?' 'Their name is legion. Innocent women make gods of their offspring, of their homes, of their housework, of their duties'" (Ouida, 1883: 273). Each these stereotypically feminine duties cause heroines, as Gilbert and Gubar argue with reference to Catherine, to deny themselves by enduring the tasks; Catherine marries Edgar and gradually deteriorates in Thrushcross Grange: "[...] Catherine's education in ladylike self-denial causes her dutifully to deny her self and decide to marry Edgar" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 276). Although Ouida depicts these images of an 'ideal' woman, her main character wholeheartedly sacrifices herself after she has 'learned her strength', instead of yielding to societal expectations.

A close reading of Folle-Farine's self-sacrifice evinces that it is not merely the result of the abuse to which she is subjected. The representation of her mother as a saint paralleled with Folle-Farine image as a devil or the child of the devil is embedded in her from an early age. In this scene, Folle-Farine is only four years old:

She was a saint, I said—a saint! A saint in body and soul! And I thought that God begrudged her, and held her too pure for man!" And he laughed aloud—thrice. The child hearing, and heavy with sleep, and eagerly desiring warmth, as a little frozen beast that coils itself in snow to slumber into death, startled by that horrible mirth, came forward. The shirt fell off her as she moved. Her little naked limbs glimmered like gold in the dusky light; her hair was as a cloud behind her; her little scarlet mouth was half open, like the mouth of a child seeking its mother's kiss; her great eyes, dazzled by the flame, flashed and burned and shone like stars. They had seen the same face ere then in Calvados. She came straight to Claudis Flamma as though drawn by that awful and discordant laughter, and by that leaping ruddy flame upon the hearth, and she stretched out her arms and muttered a word and smiled, a little dreamily, seeking to sleep, asking to be caressed, desiring she knew not what. He clenched his fist, and struck her to the ground. She fell without a sound. The blood flowed from her mouth. He looked at her where she lay, and laughed once more. "She was a saint!—a saint! And the devil begot in her *that*! (Ouida, 1883: 25)

A year later:

Hence, when, with the reviving year the child's dulled brain awakened, and all the animal activity in her sprang into vigorous action, she found herself shunned, marked, and glanced at with averted looks of mingled dread and scorn. 'A daughter of the devil!' she heard again and again muttered as they passed her; she grew to take shelter in this repute as in a fortress, and to be proud, with a savage pride, of her imputed origin. It made her a little fierce, mute, fearless, reckless, all-daring, and all enduring animal. An animal in her ferocities, her mute instincts, her supreme patience, her physical perfectness of body and of health. Perfect of shape and hue; full of force to resist; ignorant either of hope or fear; desiring only one thing, liberty; with no knowledge, but with unerring instinct [...] She was a tame animal only in one thing:—she took blows uncomplainingly, and as though comprehending that they were her inevitable portion. 'The child of the devil!' they said. In a dumb, half unconscious fashion, this five-year-old creature wondered sometimes why the devil had not been good enough to give her a skin that would not feel, and veins that would not bleed. She had always been beaten ever since her birth; she was beaten here; she thought it a law of life, as other children think it such to have their mother's kiss and their daily food and nightly prayer. (32-33)

Flamma's past idealisation of his daughter and current shame and indignation regarding her indiscretion transforms him, and his cruelty is merely a defence mechanism in order to hinder these sentiments. While, Folle-Farine's affiliation with the devil seems to make her bold as a child and she has no consciousness whatsoever of the inferior identity she is given by Flamma and the villagers. However, as she becomes a young girl, the corollaries of this label are gradually divulged:

She wondered, dimly, why she lived. It seemed to her that the devil, when he had made her, must have made her out of sport and cruelty, and then tossed her into the world to be a scapegoat and a football for any creature that might need one [...] 'I have prayed to the devil again and again and he will not hear,' she muttered. 'Marcellin says that he has ears for all. But for me he has none'. (134, 272)

While she previously procured strength from her devilish origin, now as an adolescent, Folle-Farine's feeling of abandonment encumbers her and spawns her own self-abandonment. After her mother, father, grandfather, Phratos and Marcellin have passed away, left or 'denied' her, now her creator, the devil, who hears all people, also rejects her.

Gaskell's Ruth experiences a similar denial of herself when she gives birth to a child out of wedlock. An orphan, like Ruth, and a bastard, like Ruth's baby, Folle-Farine embodies a unified depiction of Gaskell's character. Ouida and Gaskell wrote at a time when illegitimacy of a child was a cumbersome matter. Dorothy L. Haller in her article "Bastardy and Baby Farming in Victorian England" discusses the reformation of the Poor Laws in 1834:

Poverty and illegitimacy were moral issues which needed to be remedied, and the New Poor Law was designed to restore virtue and stimulate thrifty, industrious workers. The Bastardy Clause absolved the putative father of any responsibility for his bastard child and socially and economically victimized the mother in an effort to restore female morality. Its enactment fomented the growth of a modern and murderous form of an old institution, baby farming, which preyed on the infants of these humiliated and alienated mothers. Despite the tremendous toll it took on the lives of innocent children, the Victorians' fear of government intervention into social reform and the Victorian ideal of the inviolability of the family

prevented its reform until the end of the 19th century. Prior to the 19th century, the Poor Law of 1733 stipulated that the putative father was responsible for the maintenance of his illegitimate child. If he failed to support the child, the mother could have him arrested on a justice's warrant and put in prison until he agreed to do so. (Haller, 1990: 2)

The stigma that having an illegitimate child brought about on women was much graver than that on men. Ouida through *Folle-Farine* and Gaskell, through *Leonard*, depict the repercussions that an illegitimate child could cause to its family: unbearable shame and indignation in the case of Reine Flamma and ostracism for Ruth. The laws slightly improved three years before Ouida wrote *Folle-Farine*, but this did not mean an end to single mothers' problems. Sir Morris Finer, in his two volume governmental report, *Report of the Committee on One-Parent Families: Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Social Services by Command of Her Majesty* states that "The Poor Law Amendment Act 1868 restored to the parish the power to recover from the putative father the cost of maintenance of a bastard child by providing that [...] the power of the parish to obtain an order against the father disappeared and was replaced by a power for the mother" (Finer, 1974: 119). These amendments, however, did not change the sufferings the mother and child endured, which included social scorn, isolation, poverty and physical degradation. It should be noted that these laws addressed the poor which meant that the financial standards of life for the mother and her illegitimate child were low, since the economic support they received from the father were fixed and were irrelevant to his social and financial status. Unlike his fellow inhabitants, *Folle-Farine's* legal guardian is not stricken by poverty; nevertheless, he refuses to accept his daughter's indiscretion and the social embarrassment it has brought upon his social position and he resorts to treating *Folle-Farine* as a slave. Likewise, Gaskell portrays both Ruth's humiliation and that of the people who conceal her secret of bearing a child out of wedlock. Gaskell focuses on how Ruth becomes a pariah within the middle and upper social strata.

Therefore, Ruth's self-denial and eventually her self-sacrifice is a product of social intimidation and anticipated ostracisation, unlike Folle-Farine's, which is merely a consequence of her emotional and mental state. Mitchell argues in *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's Reading, 1835-1880* that "The only story of this category (i.e., written by a woman for women with the direct intention to do good) that has survived the restrictions of its time, audience and immediate moral is Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell's *Ruth* (Mitchell, 1981: 32)<sup>84</sup>. The reason for this may be because of Ruth's self-sacrifice after she has 'fallen': unlike Folle-Farine, Ruth offers moral remorse and metamorphosis into a holistic image of the 'angel of the house'. However, contrary to Catherine, Folle-Farine and Ruth share not only their fallen state as women but also their ignorance of committing 'unlawful sins' and of experiencing shame within the boundaries of acceptable female virtue. Folle-Farine sacrifices herself for Arslàn and Ruth for Bellingham/Donne's and her child's social status; nonetheless, the women remain untainted since they sacrifice themselves for love's sake. As Ouida writes, they are "[...] free, even in the basest bondage; pure, though every hand had cast defilement on it; incorrupt, amidst corruption;—for love's sake" (Ouida, 1883: 494). Ruth, however, gives birth to her illegitimate child and is struck by the 'disease of ladyhood': she embraces a life of virtue. Ashamed of what she has done and the effect the revelation might have upon her child, Ruth denies and sacrifices her own identity. She denies her identity as an impulsive and well-intentioned girl who merely longs to live with the man she loves and who is ignorant of the institution of marriage and societal norms encompassing intimate relationships between man and woman. Ruth and Folle-Farine do not have personal gain from the life they have chosen; instead, they relinquish their own happiness to protect or to help the ones they love. Again, although to the Victorian reader

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<sup>84</sup> 'This category' refers to the theme of the fallen woman in nineteenth century fiction.



these women are not physically virtuous, they are morally virtuous because they do not succumb to any vice, neither cruelty nor avarice.

Folle-Farine's and Ruth's self-sacrifice lies deeply in their representation as nurses, a highly feminine and motherly evocation in the nineteenth century. When recovered, neither Arslàn nor Bellingham has any knowledge of who restored their health and saved them from death. This scenario, employed by both Ouida and Gaskell, demonstrates the lack of tolerance regarding male inferiority to women. While Arslàn never discovers the truth, Bellingham only finds out after Ruth has died from the same fever that had struck him. Mitchell contemplates Folle-Farine's self-sacrifice: "Is this merely a conventional illustration of feminine self-sacrifice? By escalating the stakes — by making the woman's degradation responsible for the man's immortality; by allowing Folle-Farine to choose knowingly while Arslàn accepts, without examination, the priceless gift supplied by a woman — Ouida manages to imply the opposite of what she overtly says" (Mitchell, 1981: 139-140). Indeed, Ouida's depiction of Folle-Farine's self-sacrifice is rather unconventional and does not mirror Ruth's self-sacrifice. The extreme and abnormal nature of Folle-Farine's martyrdom is evident in these excerpts:

She first flung the faggots and brushwood on the hearth, and set them on fire to burn, fanned by the breath of the wind. Then she poured out a little of the wine, and kneeled down by him, and forced it drop by drop through his colourless lips, raising his head upon her as she kneeled. The wine was pure and old; it suffused his attenuated frame as with a rush of new blood; under her hand his heart moved with firmer and quicker movement. She broke bread in the wine and put the soaked morsels to his mouth as softly as she would have fed some little shivering bird made nestless by the hurricane. He was unconscious still, but he swallowed what she held to him, without knowing what he did; a slight warmth gradually spread over his limbs; a strong shudder shook him. His eyes looked dully at her through a film of exhaustion and of sleep [...] She crouched beside him, half kneeling and half sitting; her clothes were drenched, the fire scorched, the draughts of air froze, her; she had neither eaten nor drunk since the noon of the day; but she had no other remembrance than of this life which had the beauty of the sun-king and the misery of the beggar [...] After a while the feverish mutterings of his voice grew lower and less frequent; his eyes seemed to become sensible of the glare of the fire, and to contract and close in a more conscious pain; after a yet longer time

he ceased to stir so restlessly, ceased to sigh and shudder; he grew quite still, his breath came tranquilly, his head fell back, and he sank to a deep sleep. (178,180)

Folle-Farine steals food from her terrorising grandfather who would beat her to death if he had discovered her; and still she does not care for her own well-being. The girl's altruism is never uncovered, which is manifested in a single line: "It is for the man to give to the woman" (352). But, as Mitchell states above, Ouida implicitly hints the equal likelihood of the exact opposite, that it is for the woman to give to the man. Folle-Farine may appear a marionette controlled by patriarchy but she is simply a character dominated by her excessive feelings.

Ruth on the contrary is less unorthodox in her act of self-sacrifice. She does not starve or neglect herself. The process of nursing Bellingham, although a toilsome task, is partly and instinctively her duty as a nurse, and her behaviour is indicative of a problematic situation:

The third night after this was to be the crisis—the turning-point between Life and Death. Mr Davis came again to pass it by the bedside of the sufferer. Ruth was there, constant and still, intent upon watching the symptoms, and acting according to them, in obedience to Mr Davis's directions. She had never left the room. Every sense had been strained in watching—every power of thought or judgment had been kept on the full stretch. Now that Mr Davis came and took her place, and that the room was quiet for the night, she became oppressed with heaviness, which yet did not tend to sleep. She could not remember the present time, or where she was. All times of her earliest youth—the days of her childhood—were in her memory with a minuteness and fullness of detail which was miserable; for all along she felt that she had no real grasp on the scenes that were passing through her mind—that, somehow, they were long gone by, and gone by for ever—and yet she could not remember who she was now, nor where she was, and whether she had now any interests in life to take the place of those which she was conscious had passed away, although their remembrance filled her mind with painful acuteness. [...] she felt as if she ought to get up, and go and see how the troubled sleeper in yonder bed was struggling through his illness; but she could not remember who the sleeper was, and she shrunk from seeing some phantom-face on the pillow, such as now began to haunt the dark corners of the room, and look at her, jibbering and mowing as they looked. So she covered her face again, and sank into a whirling stupor of sense and feeling. By-and-by she heard her fellow-watcher stirring, and a dull wonder stole over her as to what he was doing; but the heavy languor pressed her down, and kept her still. (Gaskell, 1906: 440-441)

Ruth seems to be losing her identity again and to be pondering about her own life, rather than Bellingham's. Unlike Folle-Farine who is alert and nervous, Ruth's lethargic state, her prostrate figure and inability to recognise herself or Bellingham depicts a woman who feels disgrace and guilt. In addition, contrary to Ruth and Catherine, Folle-Farine never truly feels ashamed as a woman:

She was not conscious of degradation in her punishment; she had been bidden to bow her head and endure the lash from the earliest years she could remember. According to the only creed she knew, silence and fortitude and strength were greatest of all virtues. She stood now [...] as she had stood when a little child, erect unquailing, and ready to suffer, insensible of humiliation because unconscious of sin, and because so tutored by severity and exposure that she had as yet none of the shy shame and the fugitive shrinking of her sex. (Ouida, 1883: 104)

While Ruth and Catherine are doomed by their 'shy shame' and the 'shrinking' of their sex, Folle-Farine does not 'bow her head' at this. Whether of ignorance or indifference, Folle-Farine never fully possesses these traits; therefore, Ouida displays a female character who, within the margins of her mental aberration, accomplishes that which she desires.

The inception of Folle-Farine's self-sacrifice occurs the moment she falls in love. Ironically, this moment also marks her decision to free herself from Flamma's slavery and abuse. For the first time she acquires "a worth and dignity in her sight because one man deemed it fair"—but only temporarily (263). She is again steadily manipulated by Sartorian, the archetypal patriarch with status and wealth, who takes advantage of her love for Arslàn and reduces her once again to a dutiful victim. Although Folle-Farine resists her grandfather by disobeying him on several occasions and refuses Sartorian's gifts and sexual invitations, she still finds herself trapped in a male-dominated relationship as Sartorian's mistress. Gilbert and Gubar argue that while there is a level of resistance towards male authority on the part of the fictional female character, the social and gender power of the opposite sex is such that despite her endeavours she

is confined “in the distorting mirrors of patriarchy”, and due to the wrong choices she makes, “the journey into death is the only way out” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 284). Thus, although Folle-Farine is surrounded by men and peers into the distorting mirrors of patriarchy, the reflection also bears traces of the wild six-year old Folle-Farine, who is bold enough to pursue her one objective.

Folle-Farine and Catherine, however, have many similarities as characters. The two girls shift from one setting to another either to escape from or to find someone or something. Folle-Farine like Catherine is raised in a rural setting, close to the wilderness. When they are still mere children, the wildness of nature mirrors their own *nature*. Catherine is “a wild, wick slip” with “a saucy look”, a girl untamed. Even her father admits: “I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!” (Brontë, 2003: 71). She is “a wild hatless little savage” (53) just as Folle-Farine with her “savage eyes” (Ouida, 1883: 295), “savage independence” (98), “savage heart” (126) is “a wild beast, half-tamed” (68). In both narratives, the girls gain their wildness once they change settings and are removed far from the restrictive Victorian home (the Flamma mill-house and Thrushcross Grange). When Catherine returns to Wuthering Heights after a five week stay at Thrushcross Grange, she begins to recover the rebelliousness and audacity—which she previously shared with Heathcliff—that are unsuitable for a Victorian young female. One day, annoyed that Nelly will be present during a visit by Linton, Catherine is incensed:

She, supposing Edgar could not see her, snatched the cloth from my hand, and pinched me, with a prolonged wrench, very spitefully, on the arm....." O, Miss, that's a nasty trick! you have no right to pip me, and I'm not going to bear it! I didn't touch you, you lying *creature*!" cried she, her fingers tingling to repeat the act, and her ears red with rage. She never had power to conceal her passion, it always set her whole complexion in a blaze. "What's that then?" I retorted, showing a decided purple witness to refute her. She stamped her foot, wavered a moment, and then, irresistibly impelled by the naughty spirit within her, slapped me on the cheek a stinging blow that filled both eyes with water. "Catherine love! Catherine!"

interposed Linton, greatly shocked at the double fault of falsehood and violence which his idol had committed. (Brontë, 2003: 71)

Catherine is transformed into a wild creature again, whose “stinging blow” differentiates her from the domesticated and disciplined children, Edgar and Isabella. She is detached from the norms of congeniality that are expected to accompany a young lady, but this is only temporary, since she is later voluntarily incarcerated in Thrushcross Grange.

Ouida adopts the representation of the imprisoned woman in a male dominated setting, permeating many late eighteenth century novels in her writing, but alters the depiction of her protagonist. She gives Folle-Farine the limited freedom of nineteenth century female characters but her identity is not effaced by domesticity. Indeed, Folle-Farine epitomises the fictional Victorian young girl in the beginning of the novel, who as an orphan, like Jane and Ruth, has no choice but to reside in an unfriendly, bleak house and to endure her tormentors. Before she falls in love with Arslàn, Folle-Farine is docile at Flamma’s mill-house, since it is the only home she knows. Her mental confinement and imprisonment is further delineated when the author gives a depiction of her grandfather’s house. Ouida describes its “sweet glad garden world” and its stone walls, presenting it as a secluded place (Ouida, 1883: 97). This beautiful garden is trapped within a decaying setting, as Folle-Farine is restricted within an aberrant one. Ouida writes that the house was a “prison-house” for Folle-Farine’s mother “wherein three bitter jailers forever ruled her with a rod of iron- bigotry and penury and cruelty” (97). Her father was her captor whose “Reprimand, homily, or cynical rasping sarcasm, was all she ever heard from him” thus “she believed that he despised, and almost hated her; he held it well for women to be tutored in subjection and in trembling” (97 and 17). Flamma resembles Radcliffe’s Montoni, the “unprincipled, dauntless, cruel and enterprising” rogue, whom Madame Cheron and Emily fear and obey (Radcliffe, 1998: 358). Ouida depicts that obedience in a child is the greatest virtue and

“obedience which is rendered out of true veneration may be a tonic to the nature which is bent by it”; however, she reveals that when obedience derives from the fear that “the irons and the cell will follow, (it) does no one any moral good, teaches no virtue which can be productive hereafter” (Ouida, 1896: 38). Initially, Folle-Farine and her mother, Reine, do not resist their excessive disciplinarian, and although they seem obedient, they eventually abandon Flamma’s castle-prison since they have not experienced morality or virtue: they are innocently ignorant. While Reine and Folle-Farine both experience incarceration, they do not share Catherine’s morality; instead, Reine runs away with and is impregnated by a man of a lower class status, a self-seeking gypsy, and Folle-Farine prostitutes herself into a loveless affair with an aristocrat, a prince. Therefore, Ouida’s character does not conform to the anticipated female behaviour that mid-nineteenth century fiction, such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Ruth*, valorised.

Folle-Farine paradoxically feels that she cannot escape or enjoy more than what she has been given and, acquiesces her own condemnation: “She wondered, dimly, why she lived. It seemed to her that the devil, when he had made her, must have made her out of sport and cruelty, and then tossed her into the world to be a scapegoat and a football for any creature that might need one” (Ouida, 1883: 134). She is rendered incapable of fleeing this depraved and constricting setting and endures mental confinement, her actions being restricted and controlled by Flamma. After experiencing the sentiments of love and spending time away from her oppressed home—Ouida’s facsimile of a marital Victorian habitat—Folle-Farine’s fierceness is unleashed, she confronts her grandfather, unfetters herself from his abuse and attempts for the first time to disengage herself from his dominion:

As he spoke he seized her to strike her; in his hand he already gripped an oak stick that he had brought in with him from his timber-yard, and he raised it to rain blows on her, expecting no other course than the dumb, passive, scornful submission with which she had hitherto accepted whatsoever he had chosen to do

against her. But in lieu of the *creature*, silent and stirless, who before had stood to receive his lashes as though her body were of bronze or wood, that felt not, a leonine and superb animal sprang up in full rebellion. She started out of his grasp, her lithe form springing from his seizure as a willow bough that has been bent to earth springs back, released, into the air. She caught the staff in both her hands, wrenched it by a sudden gesture from him, and flung it away to the farther end of the chamber; then she turned on him as a hart turns brought to bay. Her supple body was erect like a young pine; her eyes flushed with a lustre he had never seen in them; the breath came hard and fast through her dilated nostrils; her mouth curled and quivered. "Touch me again!" she cried aloud, while her voice rang full and imperious through the stillness. "Touch me again; and by the heaven and hell you prate of, I will kill you!" So sudden was the revolt, so sure the menace, that the old man dropped his hands and stood and gazed at her aghast and staring; not recognizing the mute, patient, dog-like thing that he had beaten at will, in this stern, fearless, splendid, terrible creature, who faced him in all the royalty of wrath, in all the passion of insurrection. (255)

Here Folle-Farine, mentally and physically stronger than before, is finally awakened, and terminates Flamma's physical abuse and mental incarceration. Not only does she forbid him from beating her again, but also refuses to strike him. This scene marks her—temporary—separation from male dependency and the beginning of her supposed independence. However, this epiphany changes her deeply; although Folle-Farine somewhat 'relapses' when she begins to tolerate mental abuse, she never undergoes or permits physical cruelty again. After years of callousness and brutality Folle-Farine finally rises from her lethargy and abandons the mill-house, her home.

Only temporarily freed, Folle-Farine is again incarcerated. As discussed previously, the girl is held in a prison and thereafter in a hospital, where she is still perceived as a prisoner due to her mental instability:

She awakened to strength, to health, to knowledge; she awoke thus blinded and confused, and capable of little save the sense of some loathsome bondage, of some irreparable loss, of some great duty which she had left undone, of some great errand to which she had been summoned, and found wanting. She saw four close stone walls around her; she saw her wrists and her ankles bound; she saw a hole high above her head, braced with iron bars, which served to let in the few pallid streaks of daylight which alone ever found their way thither; she saw a black cross in one corner, and before it two women in black, who prayed. She tried

to rise and could not: being fettered. She tore at the rope on her wrists with her teeth like a young tigress at her chains. They essayed to soothe her, but in vain; they then made trial first of threats, than of coercion; neither affected her; she bit at the knotted cords with her white strong teeth, and, being unable to free herself, fell backward into a savage despair, glaring in mute impotent rage upon her keepers [...] At length they grew afraid of what they did. She refused all food; she turned her face to the wall; she stretched herself on her bed of straw motionless and rigid. The confinement, the absence of air, were where a living death to the creature whose lungs were stifled unless they drank in the fresh cool draught of winds blowing unchecked over the widths of the fields and forests, and whose eyes ached and grew blind unless they could gaze into the depths of free-flowing water, or feed themselves in far-reaching sight upon the radiant skies. (415-416)

Yet again, Folle-Farine is depicted as an untamed animal that must be shackled. She resumes her self-starvation which is a reaction to her involuntary confinement and the asphyxiating atmosphere of her claustrophobic hospital room. Folle-Farine's incarceration in a hospital replicates a common Victorian practice, for "[...] the 1862 amendment to the Lunacy Act of 1845 stated that for the confinement of a pauper only one medical certificate was required" (Mitchell, 2012: 398). Therefore, while Folle-Farine is legally detained, Ouida's description of her and the presence of the two women in black, presumably nuns, foreshadows Gilbert and Gubar's words regarding the Grange: "[...] society's most pressing need is to exorcise the rebelliously Satanic, irrational, and 'female' representatives of nature" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 303). Indeed, Ouida writes in the beginning of novel:

She was mute while the rough hands flew at her, the sticks struck at her, the heavy feet were driven against her body, the fingers clutched at her long hair, and twisted and tore at it—she was quite mute throughout. "Prick her in the breast, and see if the devil be still in her. I have heard say there is no better way to test a witch!" cried Flandrin's wife, writhing in rage for the outrage to the Petrus. Her foes needed no second bidding; they had her already prostrate in their midst, and a dozen eager hands seized a closer grip upon her, pulled her clothes from her chest, and, holding her down on the mud floor, searched with ravenous eyes for the signet marks of hell. The smooth skin baffled them; its rich and tender hues were without spot or blemish. "What matter; what matter?" hissed Rose Flandrin. "When our fathers hunted witches in the old time, did they stop for that? Draw blood, and you will see." She clutched a jagged rusty nail from out the wall, and leaned over her prey [...] "It is the only babe that will ever cling to thee!" she cried, with a laugh,



as the nail drew blood above the heart. Still Folle-Farine made no sound and asked no mercy. She was powerless, defenceless, flung on her back amidst her tormentors, fastened down by treading feet and clenching hands; she could resist in nothing, she could not stir a limb, still she kept silence, and her proud eyes looked unquailing into the hateful faces bent to hers. The muscles and nerves of her body quivered with a mighty pang, her chest heaved with the torture of indignity, her heart fluttered like a wounded bird—not at the physical pain, but at the shame of these women’s gaze, the loathsome contact of their reckless touch. The iron pierced deeper, but they could not make her speak. (Ouida, 1883: 86, 87, 130)

Folle-Farine’s depiction as a witch, a satanic presence that should be exorcised, is a metaphor of the bastard’s and the fallen woman’s fate within society. The ‘fathers’ who have hunted witches for centuries have implanted their ways in the village, which alludes to another image of a deeply embedded patriarchal order, the religious persecution of supposed heretics. Ironically, in both scenes Folle-Farine is surrounded by women. She is encompassed by women in the raving mob and by the nuns, which demonstrates her loss of identity and a partial voice.

At the end of the novel Folle-Farine chooses to reside in another foul edifice, Sartorian’s opulent dwelling. This is a critical twist that Ouida creates since the innocent girl is willingly corrupted. Ouida states in *Views and Opinions* that “women of perfect honesty of intentions and antecedents will adopt a dishonest course, if they think it will serve an aim or a person they care for” (Ouida 1896: 321). Indeed, Folle-Farine undergoes intense physical and spiritual coercion and still reaches utter and immoral extremes to accomplish what she desires. We find Folle-Farine first unwillingly and the second time willingly locked up in Sartorian’s palace:

“I will let you go—surely,” he said, with his low grim laugh. “I keep no woman prisoner against her will. But think one moment longer, Folle-Farine. You will take no gift at my hands?”

“None.”

“You want to go,—penniless as you are?”

“I will go so; no other way.”

“You will fall ill on the road afresh.”

“That does not concern you.”

“You will starve.”

"That is my question."

"You will have to herd with the street dogs."

"Their bite is better than your welcome."

"You will be suspected,—most likely imprisoned. You are an outcast."

"That may be."

"You will be driven to public charity."

"Not till I need a public grave."

"You will have never a glance of pity, never a look of softness, from your northern god; he has no love for you, and he is in his grave most likely. Icarus falls—always."

For the first time she quailed as though struck by a sharp blow; but her voice remained inflexible and serene.

"I can live without love or pity, as I can without home or gold. Once for all,—let me go."

"I will let you go," he said slowly, as he moved a little away. "I will let you go in seven days' time. For seven days you shall do as you please; eat, drink, be clothed, be housed, be feasted, be served, be beguiled—as the rich are. You shall taste all these things that gold gives, and which you, being ignorant, dare rashly deride and refuse. If when seven days end you still choose, you shall go, and as poor as you came. But you will not choose, for you are woman, Folle-Farine!". (Ouida, 1883: 436)

Folle-Farine is tempted into incarceration but she resists Sartorian's offerings since "he had no power on her, because of her great love" (437). To the nineteenth century reader, she becomes the 'fallen woman' although she does not 'fall' in order to indulge her yearnings, such as wealth or status, as in the case of the sensational Lady Audley and Lady Vavasour; she becomes the 'angel in the house' not as a result of her ladylike resolutions, as Catherine and Jane's, but merely because she sacrifices herself for another character.

Ouida's portrayal of Folle-Farine's eventual confinement is highly eroticised, unlike any other description of the girl:

The other,—the bodily beauty of a woman; a beauty rarely seen in open day, but only in the innermost recesses of a sensualist's palace; a creature barefooted, with chains of gold about her ankles, and loose white robes which showed each undulation of the perfect limbs, and on her breast the fires of a knot of opal; a creature in whose eyes there was one changeless look, as of some desert beast taken from the freedom of the air and cast to the darkness of some unutterable horror; a creature whose lips were for ever mute, mute as the tortured lips of Læna [...] With the faint gleam of the tender evening, there came across

the threshold a human form, barefooted, bareheaded, with broken links of golden chains gleaming here and there upon her limbs, with white robes hanging heavily, soaked with dews and rains; with sweet familiar smells of night-born blossoms, of wet leaves, of budding palm-boughs, of dark seed-sown fields, and the white flower foam of orchards, shedding their fragrance from her as she moved. Her face was bloodless as the faces of the gods; her eyes had a look of blindness; her lips were close locked together; her feet stumbled often, yet her path was straight [...] Too late for any coolness of fresh grass beneath her limbs to give them rest; too late for any twilight song of missel-thrush or merle to touch her dumb dead heart to music; too late for any kiss of clustering leaves to heal the shame that blistered on her lips and withered all their youth. And yet she loved them: loved them never yet more utterly than now when she came back to them, faithful as Persephone to the pomegranate flowers of hell. She crossed the threshold, whilst the reeds that grew in the water by the steps bathed her feet and blew together against her limbs, sorrowing for this life so like their own, which had dreamed of the songs of the gods, and had only heard the hiss of the snakes. (489, 492-493)

Contrary to the precedent similes that compare Folle-Farine to an exquisite but wild lioness (λέαινα, Laena or Leaena) Ouida here transforms her protagonist into a sensual concubine, whose past fierce look has become ‘changeless’. Ouida’s recurring allusion to Persephone and the reed is highly ominous since in the previous reference to this myth occurs when Folle-Farine is conversing with Thanatos. Indeed, after this scene Folle-Farine falls at his feet, and he “in answer, laid his hand upon her lips; and sealed them, and their secret with them, mute for evermore” (493). Ouida has given a choice to the female victim: she can abandon the source of her psychological torments without any moral consequences. Unlike Catherine, Jane and Ruth, Folle-Farine does not have to accept guilt or shame. Although Ouida uses the pattern of the confined female victim, she alters it completely when Folle-Farine eventually ‘sells’ herself to Sartorian. Throughout the novel, she is encouraged to exhibit her beauty, even by the man she loves, and to exploit it financially. Sartorian tells her: “A female thing, as beautiful as you are, makes hers everything she looks upon [...] It is the lioness in you that I care to chain; but your chains shall be of gold, Folle-Farine; and all women will envy. Name your price, set it high as you will; there is nothing that I will refuse” (426, 460). Sartorian attempts to offer her riches in

order to possess her and although Folle-Farine resists his authority at first and remains unblemished and untouched by material temptations she struggles in vain not to ‘sell’ her body to him and become a commodity. The moment when the protagonist willingly chooses a certain path for another’s sake rather than for society’s, she becomes a fallen woman and prostitutes herself for her beloved’s welfare. With this act Ouida depicts a main character who exceeds the bounds of narrative set in the works of the Brontës and Gaskell.

As Schroeder and Holt argue, Ouida portrays women “as collaborators in a system of sexual oppression” and “they participate in the subjugation of their own sex” by surrendering themselves to male domination (Schroeder and Holt, 2008: 113). In *Folle-Farine* oppression nevertheless, is primarily mental rather than sexual, Although Folle-Farine becomes Sartorian’s mistress of her own free will and sacrifices herself for Arslàn’s dream of fame and prosperity, a fact unbeknown to him, she is not tainted morally. Ouida portrays a girl, who like Catherine, enters a loveless relationship, but not for the sake of moral pretences. In the same way that sensation fiction emerged from issues that preoccupied Victorian Britain numerous novels in which madness and monomania were depicted “became best sellers, while insanity became a staple feature in imaginative literature” (Mitchell, 2012: 397). Varying from mild idiosyncrasy and fixation with physical violence,—from Dickens’ neurotic Miss Havisham to Braddon’s murderous Lady Audley<sup>85</sup>—mid-nineteenth century canonical texts, such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Ruth*, frequently depicted women’s mental breakdown and disempowerment. However, although Ouida invites the reader to reflect on the conventional tropes of imprisonment and madness as metaphors of women’s position in society, she displaces the theme of morality and renders it of little importance to the protagonist.

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<sup>85</sup> Miss Havisham in Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations* has never removed the wedding dress she wore on the day of her planned nuptials, traumatised by the abandonment of the man she was to marry.

## The Sense of Morality in *Moths*

*“...her girlhood had been killed in her as a spring blossom is crushed by a rough hot hand that, meaning to caress it, kills it” (Moths, Ouida)*

As mentioned in the first chapter, *Moths* was published in 1880 and was an immediate success. However, it received harsh criticism from highbrow magazines, periodicals and newspapers, which deprecated its writer. The novel portrays a virtuous English girl, Vere<sup>86</sup>, forced into marriage with a brute Russian prince, Zouroff, by her shallow and self-serving mother, Lady Dolly, while in love with Corèzze, a famed tenor. As a princess, Vere is placed in the upper-class circle of the greedy, adulterous and devious, which she however disdains. Although, Lady Dolly, and Zouroff are excessively conceited and self-serving, and it also revealed that they were lovers, the girl's spirit is not tainted by the corruption and wealth that surrounds her. After years of mental abuse and numerous love affairs, unable to win her love, the adulterous prince decides to divorce her. She is eventually emancipated and free to marry her beloved Corèzze, who is however injured and unable to sing again after defending Vere's honour.

Sally Mitchell and Andrew King consider *Moths* the first English novel depicting a divorced woman living happily ever after and this is perhaps one of the reasons which led to negative appraisal of the novel on its publication (Mitchell, 1996: 140 and King, 2004: 237). As

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<sup>86</sup> Vere is renamed 'Vera' by her mother "It sounds so Russian and nice and is much prettier than Vere" (Ouida, 2005, 47). In Russian 'Vera' means faith and both names derive from the Latin word *verus* which means true, real. Ouida's use of 'Vera' is not consistent after she is 'rebaptised' and the writer interchanges the two names throughout the novel which stresses the two identities Vere is forced to blend: that of the presentable and agreeable princess and her 'true' self, a childlike girl of "straight and simple rectitude" (2005: 398).

in the case of *Strathmore*, in *Moths* Ouida criticises the mid-Victorian upper class with her supposedly vituperative employment of unfaithful spouses and scrutiny of marital life. However, while the notoriety of sensation fiction in the '60s and '70s must have added to the condemnation of Ouida's novel, *Moths* treaded a path somewhat different from *Strathmore* and the sensation novel. It allowed the woman to divorce and remarry without deceiving or committing adultery, bigamy or violate a tacit moral rule. Considered an immoral and daring social commentary on high society and after receiving hostile reviews from several periodicals, as we will see in detail further on, it was nearly withdrawn from Mudie's library, "The most important and at the same time biggest circulating library was Mudie's Select Library, founded in 1842. 'Select' indicated to Mudie's readers that Mudie's stock had been carefully chosen and books would be free from immoral content" (Plietzsch, 2004: 164). The reason Mudie almost banned *Moths* was mainly due to the distressing reviews it received immediately following its publication.

The first review of *Moths* was published on the 7th of February, 1880, in the *Athenaeum*, approximately a month after its publication. The article is called "Novels of the Week" and the reviewer lists five novels, of which Ouida's is ranked first. The novel which follows *Moths* is *Christy Carew* by the Irish writer Mary Laffan. The book is considered an attack towards Catholicism and its system of women's education, while the *Athenaeum* writes that: "Whatever may be the political or religious bias of the reader, he can hardly fail to find so lifelike a sketch of society in an important portion of the realm both timely and interesting" (*Athenaeum*, 1880: 182). The third novel in question is that of Albion Winegar Tourg  e, a judge, writer and civil rights activist, who discusses, in *Fool's Errand by One of the Fools*, the Reconstruction period of the South and issues such as slavery and racism (Olsen, 1979-1996). The next novel is *The Brown Hand and the White* by Compton Emma Reade, which the reviewer utterly disregards,

omitting even a brief summary of the plot. Finally, the last review is of Arthur Jermy Mounteney Jephson's *A Pink Wedding*, a story of a visit to Japan, which the *Athenaeum* finds "readable and amusing" (*Athenaeum*, 1880: 183). The only obvious similarity between these novels is their unconventional and non-canonical plots written between 1879 and 1880.

However, in this review Ouida's literary work receives the highest praise alongside her intellectual attainments and uniqueness as a writer. What the reviewer finds remarkable is that not only does Vere divorce Zouroff and marry Corrèze, she also escapes the fate and ultimate punishment of the fallen woman: death. One of the most focal points of discussion in the reviews of *Moths* is Ouida's portrayal of the debauched upper-middle class. In this article Ouida's characters are seen as representative figures of high society and their eccentric and hypocritical demeanour, is according to the reviewer, "highly objectionable" (182). The *Athenaeum* urges its readers "to see for themselves" how "In *Moths* she (Ouida) comes forward once more as the champion of genius against society [...] she has imagined a world compact of dreadful men, whose lives are modelled of that of Vitellius, and of women whose wickedness is as of the wickedness of Messalina" (182). The reviewer here sees Ouida as a "genius against society" since she manages to ingeniously represent contemporary lifestyle and manners through her fictional characters and setting.

Three weeks after the first review of Ouida's novel, the *Saturday Review* publishes its own critical appraisal of *Moths*, from a somewhat different viewpoint. Referring mainly to the author's portrayal of society, the critic argues that Ouida has a contemptuous philosophy towards women in particular. The article states that owing to Ouida's inaccurate and improper description of society "the whole plot of this story is an abomination in itself" (*SR*, 1880: 288). In particular the reviewer caustically comments on the women depicted by the writer as representative of the

women in her “epoch”, an epoch of “silly and vicious female writers” (287-288). Although this is the stance of a single reviewer, it could well be indicative of the reception of Ouida’s works and possibly that of many other women authors, since the *Saturday Review* was one of the leading newspapers in the late nineteenth century. A passage from Ouida’s novel is quoted in the review in order to depict the writer’s bias against women:

Those who are little children now will have little left to learn when they reach womanhood [...] will have little left to discover. They are miniature women already [...] they understand very thoroughly the shades of intimacy, the suggestions of a smile, the degrees of hot and cold [...] When they are women they will at least never have Eve’s excuse for sin; they will know everything that any tempter could tell them. (Ouida, 2005: 127)

The reviewer bluntly accuses Ouida of constructing a false image of the way in which young girls are reared, “instinctively and unconsciously” into a life of gossip, profligacy, tea, tennis and house parties (288). The reviewer recognises that there may be a society such as the one Ouida describes, but “What right has she to take the shameless profligates of one small class and to call them the world and society” (288). The *Saturday Review* also acknowledges that “Her studies [...] have been extensive, if not accurate” but, nevertheless, the review closes with a denunciation of her work: “Rant, however, might be forgiven, and folly might be laughed at. But there is much in this ignorant, dull, and disgusting story, which no person whose mind is not utterly corrupt can either forgive or make a subject of laughter” (288). This literary journal openly condemns Ouida’s insistence on writing rant and filling her books with folly, while as the reviewer explains she has the wit to do otherwise.

Another article in which Ouida’s novel received negative criticism appeared in *The Academy* and was written by George Saintsbury, an authoritative British historian and critic. As in the *Saturday Review*, Ouida is accused of regarding vice as a stereotypical characteristic of the many rather than the few. The novel is considered “the most crushingly dull work of fiction that



we have read for some years. It is so apparently dull that even the queer topsy-turvy pathos which Ouida generally manages to impart fails of its effect” attributing this partially to the happy ending of the novel (*The Academy*, 1880: 192-193). The review is a caustic attack towards Ouida’s plot and generally her narrative style. Saintsbury says that the writer fails to reflect the fervour she had in other more prominent works and ironically states: “ah, how one sighs for *Chandos* or *Strapmore* in reading *Moths!*” (193). What the reader might not notice however, is that in this quote Saintsbury has misspelt Ouida’s novel *Strathmore*. The reviewer’s sarcasm is also evident from an imaginary dialogue between Ouida and her readers written in the review: “When she stamps her satiric foot and cries ‘Are they not shameful unnatural scoundrels these men and women of mine?’, we reply, ‘My dear madam, they are certainly unnatural but perhaps not in your sense; and what is more, they are dreadful bores’” (193). Saintsbury believes that the author employs bad and excessive social satire to which “she has of late years given herself up to” and this can explicate why he deems her plot and characters utterly insipid and banal (193). Ouida is depicted as a self-conceited writer who is wrongly proud of her unorthodox novel and Saintsbury closes his review of her work by writing that it “must be pronounced a stupid and a dreary book”, an even more derisive comment on the novel. Saintsbury also writes that Ouida: “had long championed modern, particularly French literature”, while in 1888 he writes an article in the *Fortnightly Review* about French writers attacking, much more than others, Emile Zola. He mentions that the *Athenaeum*, the only journal which published a laudatory review of *Moths*, was hospitable to American and French authors (*PMLA*, 1934: 1146-1147 and *FR*, 1888: 117). This connection, along with George Saintsbury’s reviews on Ouida and Zola, supports the argument that Ouida and French novelists, such as Zola, were to a certain degree viewed in a similar way; their writings were received as immoral, unpleasant and unrealistic.

Saintsbury's viewpoint, which was shared by many British writers, is scrutinised by Andrew Lang in the *Fortnightly Review* again six years before Saintsbury's article. Lang, who noticed Zola's "tremendous popularity in Russia, Italy, Denmark, Norway, and Germany" contrasts this with "his comparative neglect in England" and Britain's stance concerning Zola and other comparable writers: "the cause of our isolation is only too obvious. Our fortunate Puritanism, alas! Prevents us from understanding M. Zola and the joys of 'naturalisme'" (*FR*, 1882: 439). Indeed, as in the case of Saintsbury, Zola's liberalism was denounced by many British writers. However, in 1881 for art's sake, Emile Zola ironically complained that legalised divorce would be the ruin of literature because it would make marital misery solvable and, thus, robs the novelist of his subject matter (Humphreys, 1999: 42). And Ouida was a part of this alleged 'ruin' with her depiction of a successful second marriage as a novel's ending. Ouida's novels, often heatedly criticised for their immoral content and context, are, as we have seen in other reviews, compared to those of French novelists of the time such as Zola. It is not by chance that *Moths* is compared to Emile Zola's *Nana* and that Ouida is frequently associated with other French writers, since, as it will be discussed further in this paper, naturalism<sup>87</sup> can be traced in several of her works, such as *Moths* and *Princess Napraxine*.

In the vein of George Saintsbury's article, A.K Fiske writes an article published in 1880 in the *North American Review* entitled "Profligacy in Fiction. I. Zola's *Nana* II. Ouida's *Moths*". The review discusses both novels and their depiction of debauchery. While Zola "professes to describe the vice that dresses in its own garb [...] out of the range of decent social life" (Fiske,

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<sup>87</sup> According to Sally Mitchell in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* "Literary naturalism in fiction and drama was a style of writing founded in realism and formulated by the French novelist Emile Zola (1840-1902), who applied the methods of nineteenth-century science to the writing of literature. [...] As a force in late nineteenth century thought naturalism was highly controversial. Since much naturalist literature dealt frankly with issues of sexuality, evolutionary determinism, and agnosticism or atheism, its creators were generally open to public censure. [...] The Victorian public were not, in general, favorably disposed toward naturalism" (532-533).

1880: 83), Ouida “spies about genteel society in search of vice disguised by rank, by wealth, by culture or by fashion” (83). Just as the last two reviews, this one is highly critical and unfavourable towards Ouida’s literary work, although it concentrates more on the lack of morale in her novel. The reviewer writes about the intolerance towards authors who disdain society’s ethical norms, something which Ouida is regarded as acting out with her publication of *Moths*. Fiske discusses Ouida’s negative perception of women. He reproaches Ouida for depicting her misconceptions of the female gender in her work: “In her pages, men are swayed by the passions of their lower nature, and women are not merely their weak and willing victims but their artful and ready seducers” (85). Concerning the characters in *Moths*, the critic mentions only Zouroff in order to present Ouida and her ill-favoured opinion of men as well, since the Russian prince according to Fiske “is the incarnation of the masculine vice and brutality of society” (85). The review goes on to discuss Ouida’s works in general and criticises the fact that “she professes to regard them simply as giving truthful pictures of human society as it exists to-day” (85). Fiske’s review ends not so much with a reprobation of Ouida’s work, as in Saintsbury’s case, but with a condemnation of her readers; it is stated that as long as writers such as Ouida and Zola “are paid and encouraged” and their books are devoured by the libraries and shops then they will continue to spread their licentious ideologies. Fiske considers these stances as a foreign “infection” since he does not perceive Ouida as an Englishwoman (87). Therefore, once again Ouida’s “yieldings to lust” and sensuality, particularly in *Moths*, were harshly censured (88).

Apart from the fact that the two novels were published on the same year, this realism Ouida sees in her work is perhaps another reason why she is juxtaposed to Emile Zola<sup>88</sup>. Fiske

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<sup>88</sup> In her chapter “Romance and Realism” in *Frescoes, Etc: Dramatic Sketches*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1885: 299-310, Ouida states her opinion concerning French novelists and insinuates that she endeavours to follow in their footsteps: “The realistic novels of France are very fine of their kind, because they are not afraid to grapple with vice and depravity in its worst form; but the realistic novel of English or English-writing authors is no more real than the

argues that Zola's *Nana* is not a delineation of reality, neither does he belong to the school of realism and his argument can be applied to Ouida's *Moths*:

People averse to analyzing take it to mean that the work in question (*Nana*) portrays life and character precisely as they exist, without the color and the glamour which fiction is supposed generally to throw over its descriptions. But as applied to Zola's work it means nothing of the kind. It means that he drags into literature what others would not touch because of its coarseness or its foulness. He displays no extraordinary power in painting scenes of actual life, in portraying human character or in fathoming the feelings or the motives of men. But, where another paints a garden of flowers, he depicts a dunghill; where others present to the imagination fields and trees and mountains or the charms of home-life, he conjures up the prospect behind the stables, the slough, at the foot of the drain, and the disgusting bestiality of the slums. This seamy side of things is no more real than the other, and its delineation no more 'realistic' in the sense given to that term. (Fiske, 1880: 80)

The sensationalism, morbidity and excess portrayed in *Nana* and *Moths* are the key denominators of the two novels. In the vein of Zola, Ouida depicts the "slums" of the aristocracy, the filth of vain and debauched minds and the hypocrisy which lies behind the doors of drawing rooms:

I will salute Jeanne on both cheeks to-morrow, because life is a hypocrisy [...] She (Vere) was the martyr of a false civilization, of a society as corrupt as that of Borgias, and far more dishonest. She had chastity, and she had courage. We, who are all poltroons, and most of us adulteresses, when we find a woman like that gibbet her, *pour encourager les autres*. (Ouida, 2005: 542)

Here Ouida portrays the vulgar duplicity of the upper class, and the fact that Zouroff's sister speaks of Vere in a past tense denotes that her divorce has stigmatised her forever and she has been 'expunged' from the upper class circle. Referring to either the literary movement of Naturalism or that of Decadence, France's appetite in literature was overly hedonistic for

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faded daguerreotypes of our grandmothers, where all the features are blurred into one indistinct brown cloud of shadow. I cannot suppose that my own experiences can be wholly exceptional ones, yet I have known very handsome people, I have known very fine characters, I have also known some very wicked ones, and I have also known many circumstances so romantic that were they described in fiction, they would be ridiculed as exaggerated and impossible; in real life there are coincidences so startling, mysteries so singular, destinies so strange, that no wise novelist could venture to portray them for fear of making his work appear too bizarre and too melodramatic". (307)

conservative Victorian Britain, hence the disapproval of Ouida's novel.

This supposed profligacy depicted in *Moths* is introduced from the beginning of the novel with the remarriage of Vere's mother, Lady Dolly. Although Dolly is a widow rather than divorced, Ouida's depiction of her reintegrating effortlessly into high society is rather unconventional since according to Pat Jaddard and Jennifer Phegley widows were socially stigmatised by their first marriage. In her book *Death in Victorian Family*, Jaddard writes:

Marriage was the most important social institution for the vast majority of middle- and upper-class women in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Their society emphasized the 'natural' separation of the spheres on a gender basis, and young girls were brought up primarily to be good wives and mothers. [...] Widowhood, as the end of marriage, was a devastating experience, entailing the loss of the central role of wife, which defined the identity and sense of worth of so many women. The role of the widow was stigmatized less than that of the spinster, but it was considerably inferior to that of wife. It signifies the probable end of the social recognition and responsibilities which flowed from the husband's work, wealth, and status. Widows were set apart from society, and yet starkly identifies by their sombre weeds. For most women, there was no escape from this new condition, since few widows remarried and there were few widows remarried and there were few opportunities for meeting new partners or taking on different challenges through a career. Widowhood was a final destiny, an involuntary commitment to a form of social exile. (Jaddard, 1996: 230-231)

So while most widows were marginalised at the time, Ouida allows Lady Dolly to be one of those few women who did manage to remarry and avoid social exclusion. She not only marries her second husband very close to Herbert's, Vere's father, death, but also ascends to a dominant status by selecting a man who is well-off financially and distinguished socially. Phegley points out that "while remarriage rates were as high as 30 percent in previous centuries, by the Victorian era widows were only remarrying at an average of 11-12 percent (Phegley, 2012: 158). This could be attributed to the high moral standards during that period, which possibly deterred women from seeking another husband. Therefore, with her portrayal of a remarried widow Ouida indirectly comments and goes against the strict mores of her society's gendered codes who would

otherwise consider her a social pariah.

Lady Dolly is presented as the epitome of the upper class woman portrayed in *Moths*, a woman that is content with a life of social gatherings, dressing up and gossiping:

Lady Dolly ought to have been perfectly happy. She had everything that can constitute the joys of a woman of her epoch. She was at Trouville. She had won heaps of money at play. She had made a correct book on the races. She had seen her chief rival looking bilious in an unbecoming gown. She had had a letter from her husband to say he was going away to Java or Jupiter or somewhere indefinitely. She wore a costume which had cost a great tailor twenty hours of anxious and continuous reflection. Nothing but *baptiste* indeed; but *baptiste* sublimised and apotheosised by niello buttons, old lace, and genius. She had her adorers and slaves grouped about her. She had found her dearest friend out in cheating at cards. She had dined the night before at the Maison Persanne, and would dine this night at the Maison Normande. She had been told a state secret by a minister which she knew it was shameful of him to have been coaxed and chaffed into revealing. [...] She had floated and bobbed and swum and splashed semi-nude, with all the other mermaids *à la mode* and had shown that she must still be a pretty woman, pretty even in daylight or the men would not have looked at her so: and yet with all this she was not enjoying herself. (Ouida, 2005, 47)

Ouida here depicts the upper classes' ennui and lack of gratitude for what they possess. She mentions the planets Java and Jupiter together six times in her text in order to stress and satirise the indifference prevalent towards the institution of marriage. As in *Strathmore*, she criticises marriages of convenience with her portrayal of Lady Dolly's marital relationship with her newly wed husband:

Lady Dolly and Mr. Vanderdecken did not perhaps find it so perfectly well assorted when they had had a little of it; she thought him stingy, he thought her frivolous, but they did not tell anybody else so, and so everybody always said that the marriage was very nice. They were always seen in the Bois or the Park together, and always kept house together three months every spring in London; they went to country houses together, and certainly dined out together at least a dozen times every season; nothing could be nicer, Lady Dolly took care of that. She thought him a great bore, a great screw; she never had enough money by half, and he was sometimes very nasty about checks. But he was not troublesome about anything else, and was generally head over ears in some wonderful loan, or contract, or subsidy, which entailed distant journeys and absorbed him entirely; so that, on the whole, she was content and enjoyed herself. (59)

As in the case of Marion and the Marquis, Lady Dolly and her husband lead a separate life and simply meet in public and for social events in order to keep up the pretence of having a ‘nice’ marriage. However, unlike Marion, Ouida depicts Lady Dolly in both excerpts as unsatisfied with her everyday life, commenting in this way on the dullness and emptiness of a life limited to superficial activities.

Ouida goes on to present in detail the lifestyle of the upper class and she begins with the portrayal of young girls of the aristocracy being reared into womanhood:

Those who are little children now will have little left to learn when they reach womanhood. The little children that are about us at afternoon tea and at lawn tennis, that are petted by house parties and romped with at pigeon-shooting, will have little left to discover. They are miniature women already [...] they know much of the science of flirtation which society has substituted for passion; they understand very thoroughly the shades of intimacy, the suggestions of a smile, the degrees of hot and cold [...] When they are women they will at least never have Eve’s excuse for sin; they will know everything that any tempter could tell them. (Ouida, 2005: 127)

While these are Ouida’s words as a narrator, she has Corèzze, one of the main protagonists and the only hero in the novel, express the same opinions concerning women of a higher social rank. The tenor represents the ideal man who, although surrounded by immoral women, is not fooled by them, owing this to his emotional intellect. In the excerpt below Corèzze fears that Vere will gradually become one of these ‘miniature women’:

‘How sweet she is now; sweet as the sweetbriar, and as healthy,’ he thought to himself. ‘How clear the soul, how clear the eyes! If only that would last! But one little year in the world, and it will be all altered. She will have gained some *chic*, no doubt, and some talent and tact; she will wear high-heeled shoes, and she will have drawn in her waist [...] She will have learned what the sickly sarcasms mean, and the wrapt-up prurienices intend, and what women and men are worth, and how politics are knavish tricks, and the value of a thing is just as much as it will bring, and all the rest of the dreary gospel of self. What a pity! what a pity! But it is always so. I dare say she will never stoop to folly as her pretty mother does; but the bloom will go. She will be surprised, shocked, pained; then, little by little, she will get used to it all — they all do — and then the world will have her, body and soul, and perhaps will put a bit of ice where that tender heart

now beats. She will be a great lady, I dare say — a very great lady — nothing worse, very likely; but, all the same, my sweetbriar will be withered, and my white wild rose will be dead. (Ouida, 2005: 93-94)

Ouida's conveys here an image of the way in which young upper-class girls are reared, "instinctively and unconsciously", into a life of profligacy, gossip, tea, tennis and house parties and indulge in socialising and a life of leisure, a construction that was not entirely false (Ouida, 2005: 127). In contrast to the middle and working class, "Aristocratic life was predicated on the assumption of ample leisure. What distinguished the aristocracy and to some extent the gentry from other classes was that they enjoyed a substantial income without having to spend the greater part of their time earning it. This left them free for a great variety of other activities [...] gambling, horse racing, yachting, shooting, womanizing, visits to music hall, some of which were perhaps little more than an escape form boredom" (Harrison, 1991: 34). Therefore, although Ouida's delineation of the aristocratic class may be exaggerated, it could be regarded as a means through which her opinion, concerning these critical differences between classes as well as gender, was elucidated in the novel.

These upper class girls then go on to become the ladies which Ouida, perhaps in her most intense and harsh commentary of high society, depicts through Vere's eyes:

Lady Stroat gave them lip-service, indeed, but with that exception, no one took the trouble even to render them that questionable homage which hypocrisy pays to virtue. In a world that was the really great world, so far as fashion went and rank (for the house-party at Félicité was composed of people of the purest blood and highest station, people very exclusive, very prominent, and very illustrious), Vere found things that seemed passing strange to her. When she heard of professional beauties, whose portraits were sold for a shilling, and whose names were as cheap as red herrings, yet who were received at court and envied by princesses; when she saw that men were the wooed, not the wooers, and that the art of flirtation was reduced to a tournament of effrontery; when she saw a great duchess go out with the guns, carrying her own chokebore by Purdy and showing her slender limbs in gaiters; when she saw married women not much older than herself spending hour after hour in the fever of *chemin de fer*; when she learned that they were very greedy for their winnings to be paid, but never dreamt of being asked to pay their losses; when she saw these women with babies in their nurseries, making unblushing love to other women's husbands, and



saw every one looking on the pastime as a matter of course quite good-naturedly; when she saw one of these ladies take a flea from her person and cry. *Qui m'aime l'avale*, and a prince of semi-royal blood swallow the flea in a glass of water: when to these things, and a hundred others like them, the young student from the Northumbrian moors was the silent and amazed listener and spectator, she felt indeed lost in a strange and terrible world; and something that was very like disgust shone from her clear eyes and closed her proud mouth. (Ouida, 2005: 138)

Images of avarice, 'unblushing' adulterous intercourse, and negligent mothers are perceived here and throughout Ouida's novel as characteristics of the lifestyle adopted by the upper classes and in particular women. However, while one might assume that, since Ouida was considered an anti-feminist, she is attacking women in this excerpt, it could be highlighted instead that the writer simply portrays women as behaving in a way men openly behaved before them. Thus, her criticism lies upon the corruption of the institution of marriage as a whole and vices more easily practiced by high society due to a plethora of wealth and time.

Ouida recurrently exhibits this lack of morality and modesty through Vere, who is ashamed by the promiscuity of the ladies surrounding her. When sixteen year old Vere decides to wander alone in the countryside and returns home with the assistance of a young and unmarried man and without her maid and her shoes, both the girl and her mother feel humiliated, but apparently for different reasons:

As the group of living human pegtops swarmed before her on the edge of the sea, and she realised that it was actually her mother, actually her dead father's wife, who was before her, with those black and yellow stripes for all her covering, Vere felt her cheeks and brow burn all over as with fire. They thought she was blushing with shame at herself, but she was blushing for shame for them, and those tight-drawn rainbow-coloured stripes that showed every line of the form more than the kilted skirts and scant rags of the fisher-girls ever showed theirs. If it were right to come down to dance about in the water with half-a-dozen men around, how could that which she had done herself be so very wrong? The sea and the sands and the sky seemed to go round with her. She was only conscious of the anger sparkling from her mother's eyes; she did not heed the tittering and the teasing with which the other ladies surrounded her companion. (Ouida, 2005: 91)

Vere's mother is mortified since it is inappropriate for a young lady to wander alone with her feet bare, whereas she and her lady friends can socialise half-naked in their revealing swimsuits since it is quite fashionable. Sally Ledger in her book *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* writes that "Ideally, Victorian women were meant to remain in the private sphere, enduring sexual activity only in the interests of maternity", bound by "the constraints imposed by the impropriety associated with the appearance of unaccompanied women" (Ledger, 1997: 153,154). A woman walking alone on the streets in late Victorian Britain was most likely a New Woman or a prostitute and women in general could not "move freely without the fear of attack or the label of unrespectability" (Ledger, 1997: 154)<sup>89</sup>. Ouida mocks these norms by presenting Vere's action as supposedly inappropriate because the girl wandered alone and is later accompanied by an unmarried man and Lady Dolly's behaviour as socially accepted since she simply mimics other women of her status.

Having entered womanhood and unavoidably a 'member' of the upper class Vere's initial shock has subsided and she now views her rank with bitterness:

[...] "it is with flowers as with everything else, I think, in the world: one cannot enjoy them for the profusion and the waste of them everywhere. When one thinks of the millions that die at one ball!—and no one hardly looks at them. The most you hear any one say is, 'The rooms look very well to-night.' And the flowers die for that."

"That comes of the pretentious prodigality we call civilization," said Corrèze. "More prosaically, it is just the same with food: at every grand dinner enough food is wasted to feed a whole street, and the number of dishes is so exaggerated that half of them go away untested, and even the other half is too much for any mortal appetite. I do not know why we do it; no one enjoys it; Lazarus out of the alleys might, perhaps, by way of change, but then he is never invited."

"Everything in our life is so exaggerated," said Vere, with a sigh of fatigue, as she recalled the endless weariness of the state banquets, the court balls, the perpetual succession of entertainments, which in her

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<sup>89</sup> As mentioned in other chapters Ouida set her stories in countries other than Britain since her readership and reviewers were mainly British it is safe to say that the setting of the foreign country was implemented as a means of achieve subtlety.

world represented pleasure. “There is nothing but exaggeration everywhere; to me it always seems vulgarity. Our dress is overloaded like our dinners; our days are over-filled like our houses. Who is to blame? The leaders of society, I suppose”. (342)

‘With a sigh of fatigue’, Vere is sickened by the overindulgence and extravagance that surrounds her. Ouida’s depictions of wasting the beauties of life and society’s ignorance and indifference—which will be discussed in the next chapter concerning *In Maremma*, *Moths*’s aftermath—come to add to her recurrent concerns regarding relationships and morality.

The immorality of women is not only observed by Vere; even Corèzze whose love for the girl changes him can perceive and is repulsed by them:

Corèzze did not esteem women highly. They had caressed him into satiety, and wooed him till his gratitude was more than half contempt; but in his innermost heart, where his old faiths dwelt unseen by even his best friends, there was the fancy of what a woman should be, might be, unspotted by the world, and innocent in thought as well as deed. [...] he, the lover of so many women [...] saw that he might be the master of her fate and her. For an instant the temptation seized him, like a flame that wrapped him in its fire from head to foot. But the appeal to his strength and to his pity called him from out that mist and heat of passion and desire”. (Ouida, 2005: 105, 522)

The singer is tempted to seduce a married woman, he contemplates luring her into adultery but restrains himself out of respect for Vere. Unlike Zouroff and most of the women in Ouida’s novel Corèzze chooses not to ‘devour’ Vere and thus displaces himself from the swarm of degenerates girdling him. Corèzze, is the only character of a lower class origin who manages to enter the circles of the elite, embrace several practices of high society but finally escape corruption. However, of all the characters Ouida choses to punish Corèzze; as in the case of Folle-Farine and Musa in *In Maremma* Ouida punishes those that have violated unspoken rules—Folle-Farine and Musa being fallen women and Corèzze for pursuing a married woman and abandoning high life—depicting the inescapable stigma of social deviance.

Although Ouida's plot was considered an exaggerated depiction of the upper classes and was deemed unconventional, her unconventionality is in some ways conservative as well; she implements a character who endures an abusive, loveless marriage but is unwilling to free herself from it even when she has the chance:

Sergius Zouroff forgot that he was a gentleman, and all that was of manliness in him perished in his frenzy. He raised his arm and struck her. She staggered, and fell against the marble of the console by which she stood, but no cry escaped her; she recovered herself and stood erect, a little stunned, but with no fear upon her face.

"You have all your rights now," he cried, brutally, with a rough laugh that covered his shame at his own act. "You can divorce me, Madame, '*sous le toit conjugal*,' and '*violence personnelle*', and all the rest; you have all your rights. The law will be with you." (473-74)

Zouroff hits Vere knowing that she can seek punishment by divorcing him. However, even though she can now legally divorce Zouroff and is not threatened by him to avoid doing so, the girl still refuses to abandon him and this where Ouida's unconventional conservatism lies:

The world she lived in had taught her nothing of its vanities, of its laxities, of its intrigues. She kept the heart of her girlhood. She was still of the old fashion, and a faithless wife was to her a wanton. Marriage might be loveless, and joyless, and soulless, and outrage all that it brought; but its bond had been taken, and its obligations accepted; no sin of others could set her free. Her husband could not have understood that, nor could her mother, nor could her world; but to Vere it was clear as the day, that, not to be utterly worthless in her own sight, not to be base as the sold creatures of the streets, she must give fidelity to the faithless, cleanliness to the unclean. (283)

Vere is unwilling to desert her husband because she does not want to commit the supposed sin of dismantling a marriage. Undoubtedly, Ouida's portrayal of a woman who is faithful to her standards apart from a conservative perspective could also be viewed as a mockery of those in her society who defy universal moral codes.

Vere's rather convenient miscarriage could also be viewed as a conservative incident on Ouida's part. It seems that even her radical plot could not allow a mother to leave her children

and husband. As mentioned previously, Ouida, although childless, defended maternity and its responsibilities and thus Vere's unwillingness to live with Zouroff and endure his illicit affairs with other women—leading to her being willingly secluded in a castle in Poland—would not have taken place if Vere had given birth to a child. Anne Humphreys in her essay “Breaking Apart: The Early Victorian Divorce Novel” mentions that “after the passage of the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1857, there was a slow but steady increase in the number of novels that featured divorce as an action thought about, or sometimes attempted, or less frequently, achieved” and that only after the 1880's “did divorced characters figure in significant ways in the novel”, the year *Moths* was published (Humphreys, 1999: 42). Although the novel may have marked the beginning of a new era for what Humphreys calls the divorce novel, Ouida could not have had the honourable Vere abandon her offspring, if it were born, since “the woman had no right to keep or even see her children” after a divorce or judicial separation if the husband saw fit to strip her from this right (45). Therefore, Ouida conservatively avoids the ramifications of a scandalous character such as Lady Audley who abandons her child, by letting Vere's child die at birth and releasing her from any responsibilities affiliated to Zouroff.

Another subject which is again examined in *Strathmore* is Ouida's descriptions of marriage and moral standards. In a dialogue with her sister-in-law, Madame Nelaguine, Vere states that “a woman who divorces her husband is a prostitute legalised by a form” (Ouida, 2005: 423). It is rather intriguing that Ouida's character does not even fantasise about procuring a divorce, an unfathomable and utterly immoral notion for a woman and especially a princess. These lines could be perceived as a mockery of Victorian perceptions of marriage and divorce since Vere does separate from Zouroff without being labelled a prostitute or stigmatised in any way. It can also be a reference to the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 since a man

could acquire a divorce on the pretence of adultery, whereas, a woman's file for a divorce should be based on adultery accompanied by physical abuse or other extreme conditions (Mitchell, 1996: 179). Indeed, Zouroff accuses Vere of being adulterous and is granted a divorce while society turns a blind eye to the falsehood of his accusation and his own indiscretions. When Corèzze, unable to endure Vere's deterioration and seclusion in Zouroff's Polish castle, confronts the prince's sister, Princess Nadine Nelaguine, and endeavours to persuade her that Vere has not committed adultery, Nadine admits that Zouroff is not jealous of him: "You do not see that his desire is, not to save his wife from you, but to force her to divorce him" (Ouida, 2005: 529). Zouroff is simply punishing Vere for her unwillingness to submit to her role as a wife and coexist with his mistress Jeanne de Sonnaz. All of the women in the novel, virtuous or otherwise would rather withstand their husbands' indiscretions than endure the scandalous ramifications of a divorce; Vere tells Zouroff: "I shall not divorce you, I do not take my wrongs into the shame of public courts" (474). Whether the wife had committed an immoral act or not she would undoubtedly be the accused in a divorce case during the Victorian era. It is not quite clear but seemingly Zouroff acknowledges that Vere will never venture to reproach him of adultery and will either perish in his isolated castle or falsely admit adultery so as not to disgrace him. Indeed, at the end of the novel the burden of blame is laid on Vere: "Russia, which permits no wife to plead against her husband, set him free and annulled his marriage on the testimony of servants, who, willing to please, and indifferent to a lie the more, or a lie the less, bore the false witness that they thought would be agreeable to their lord" (Ouida, 2005: 542). As mentioned in *Strathmore* a divorce was usually issued in favour of the husband and stigmatised the woman irreparably.

In William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Newcomes* (1855) Barnes's wife, who is brutally beaten by her husband flees with the man she loves and manages to divorce and remarry. However, she is not only condemned by society but by the narrator himself. Vere on the other hand is never abused physically or runs away with Corèzze and neither society nor the narrator seems to condemn her for her second marriage. On the contrary she is pictured at the end of the novel in a white dress leading a blithesome life in the countryside with her new husband and child. Therefore, Ouida does not simply follow the pattern of the early or later divorce novels depicting and tactfully scrutinising the injustices and inequalities of the English law towards Victorian women, but also focuses on society and the way in which various characters view and experience marital life.

Marital life is also discussed by Gubar and Gilbert who aver that Victorian women writers were urged to exemplify via their female characters either the 'angel in the house' or the 'demon', the two social categorisations into which women were divided into in a patriarchal society—the ideal virtuous female figure and the scorned one. Among other topics, they concentrate on female conduct in nineteenth century texts such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. In the case of *Moths*, Vere, as Jane in *Jane Eyre* and Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*, is restrained by society and its expectations of women's manners. According to them the female protagonist is compelled to make several choices due to the patriarchal and upper class forces encompassing her. Vere for example is obliged to leave her blithe and carefree rural birthplace only to enter into aristocracy where she is taught to be polite, reserved and delicate, as a proper lady should be. This is what Gilbert and Gubar call the "social disease of ladyhood", the rules of conduct taught from one woman to the other in order to live up to men's expectations; a disease which strips her of her independence and a fate that can be assigned to many Victorian heroines

and victims (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 280). These gender duties compel her to “deny herself” obey her mother’s demand to marry Prince Zourroff and gradually deteriorate in a secluded Polish castle (276). Since, Victorian culture was of a patriarchal nature and social and biological forces were at work against women, they were inevitably restrained in a limited sphere, reminiscing that of fiction. Gilbert and Gubar suggest that although there is a level of resistance towards male authority on the part of the fictional and non-fictional female, the social and gender power of the opposite sex is such that despite women’s endeavours they are trapped in a male dominated society, bound to their female chores and roles.

Ouida in *Strathmore* and Braddon in *Lady Audley* seem to disregard the fact that Lady Audley has been abandoned by her husband for three years or that Marion is not married to the Marquis, and they both have them punished for their supposed indiscretions. However, in *Moths* Ouida allows Dolly and all the other women who commit adultery to escape punishment while Vere, the victim, who is not a fallen woman, is ‘rewarded’ with a divorce and by marrying the man she loves. The novel could be viewed not only as a continuation of sensation fiction but also a provoking expansion and ‘perfection’ of it since although surrounded by a corrupted upper class, Vere does not succumb to greed and adultery or become capricious and deceitful. These facts rendered *Moths* highly controversial and unconventional and although most reviews, as will be shown in the next section, attacked Ouida’s delineation of upper classes they do not address the issue of divorce, most possibly in order to avoid conflict and again keeping up appearances. Even Chatto and Windus cordially write to her: “Political satirical sketches are so uncertain in their nature that no one can foretell how they may hit the public fancy” (Nieman, 1994: 21) Referring to *Moths* and in an attempt to appease Ouida for the breaking up of the type her publishers hold her mockery of the upper classes accountable for their actions.



### ***Mythology and the Artist in In Maremma***

*In Maremma*, written in 1882, was considered “probably the finest of her [Ouida’s] Italian novels” according to Eileen Bigland in *Ouida: A Passionate Victorian* and “certainly the best” of them in the 1880s as Elizabeth Lee argues in *Ouida: A Memoir* (Bigland, 1950: 162 and Lee, 1914: 149). This chapter will discuss Ouida’s use of mythology, the role of the female artist and Musa, the protagonist, as a self-portrait of the author. As mentioned in the introduction, *In Maremma* has not been subjected to any extensive scrutiny comparable to that of her other novels. However, the nineteenth century press saw over ten reviews written regarding the novel, a substantial figure at the time, which renders it deserving of the critical attention *Under Two Flags* and *Moths* had received then and in the following centuries. Andrew King however, in two of his essays, has focused on the role of myth and the artist in *Ariadne* and *Pascarel*. Unlike these two early novels, where Ouida’s self-portrait is an “an ironic one”, in *In Maremma* Musa seems like a more accurate and mature reflection of the author’s character (King, 2013: 214). King writes that “The idea of the woman artist that Ouida powerfully presents from the 1880s onward is that of the social activist, the idea of the artist-aristocrat now justifying strident intervention. If she did not yet pursue her politics with as little recourse to economic self-interest as she would in the last decade of her life, the effect of this shift of emphasis is still visible even in commercially successful novels as *Moths* and *The Massarenes* (1897)” (222). And that being said, since *In Maremma* was written right after the conundrum of the commercial

*Moths*, and in hope of quietening the uproar surrounding the latter novel, the focus on mythology, art, the artist and aesthetics, rather than politics, is in the core of *In Maremma*.

In *In Maremma* Ouida narrates the story of Musa, a peasant girl and daughter of Saturnino Mastarna, a bandit revered by the poor. After years of being pursued, Saturnino is finally apprehended by the carabinieri and, in their endeavour to humiliate and demythologise him, they turn him into a spectacle, chained and whipped while riding on a horse throughout the villages. In one of the villages, Maremma, Saturnino encounters Joconda, the woman who is to become Musa's guardian. The two seem to have met in the past, the bandit having rescued one of her children from certain death. As expected Saturnino pleads with her to reciprocate the favour she received and seek for his child in the midst of an attacked and abandoned village. Joconda, a robust and honest woman in her fifties, embarks on a journey through the mountains to search for the baby, not knowing whether she will trace her whereabouts or even find her alive. After saving Saturnino's offspring from a burnt down village, the woman brings Musa to Maremma where she raises her. When Joconda dies of old age, Musa is coerced into leaving her home after the villagers fraudulently and avariciously claim that the deceased owes them money. Unwelcomed by the inhabitants and after throwing at them the money Joconda had left her, Musa is driven away from her hometown and "turns to those who have been dead for three hundred years if one": she decides to reside in the Etruscan tombs which she had discovered and often visited throughout the past couple of years (Ouida 1882: 180, Vol. I). Although the tombs are abundant with gold and jewellery the young girl, in her teens now and penniless, never contemplates stealing from them in order to survive in the sickly marshes of the Maremma region. A dweller amongst treasures, Musa selects nature as her provider of food and material objects.

Shortly after she has begun residing in the tombs, she gives shelter to Saturnino who has escaped, both of them unaware that they are father and daughter. When he recovers he steals several of the Etruscan valuables but is later captured in his attempt to sell them. However, the bandit manages to become a fugitive again accompanied by another man, Este, an exile accused for the murder of his mistress. After parting ways, Este is also saved and given sanctuary in the tombs by Musa. Following months of illness and treatment, he eventually recovers and the two dwellers of the tombs seem to gradually experience love for one another. However, when Este is exonerated of his crime he abandons Musa and returns to Mantua, where he indulges himself in a life of lust and luxury, oblivious to the fact that Musa is pregnant with his child, which dies after birth. Although the concept of seeking Este weighs upon her, she never submits to her sorrow-laden yearning. The girl's woe is exacerbated when the rapacious carabinieri discover the tombs, searching for its gold. Instead they encounter Joconda's tomb and that of Musa's baby. Musa is arrested and taken to Maremma where she is placed in prison. One of her admirers, a Sicilian, manages to verify that she should not be held accountable for the death of her child and thus she is freed and allowed to remain in the tombs. Saturnino visits Musa, after being informed that she is his daughter and has been deserted by Este, during which the girl senses that he is plotting to harm Este. She travels on foot to Mantua to warn her beloved and there she fatally wounds her father. When it is revealed that Este has a mistress, Musa leaves the city and upon her return to the hollow tombs, she places Este's dagger "upright in the spot where the little child had lain upon its bed of rosemary" and kills herself (327, Vol. III).

*In Maremma* was such a success that according to Nieman's charts—which are based on Chatto and Windus's ledgers and contract files—Ouida was paid by her publishers £1300 for the three-decker novel, possibly the highest amount she had ever received and certainly the highest

she would ever receive (Nieman, 1994)<sup>90</sup>. However, when *In Maremma* was published, Ouida wrote to Chatto and Windus sometime the same year: “You cannot expect the book to be as popular as *Moths* but you wished for one dans le genre of *Ariadne*” (Appendix, lt. 28). As I have mentioned in a previous study of *Moths*, the novel caused quite a stir, since it openly criticised upper class society for its vulgarity. The aforementioned letter is a response to another written on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1880, only two months after *Moths* was published:

We most urgently entreat you not to let your next story resemble ‘In a Winter City’, ‘Friendship’, or ‘Moths’. These last three we are convinced, have injured your popularity. We hope you will avoid such painful social conditions as there disclosed and which under the most delicate treatment are uninviting to the great bulk of readers, and that you will return to such models as you have given us in ‘The Dog of Flanders’ or ‘Ariadne’. (Nieman, 1994 :18)

Chatto's tone may not be censorious but the letter is more in the vein of a demand for change in content rather than a suggestion or request; and if one recalls the subsequent problems the publication of *Moths* caused to Ouida's career—Mudie's threats to ban it and the breaking down of its type—it is in no doubt that this had a negative impact upon the writer.

Indeed, this letter must have affected Ouida greatly since, after *Moths*, for the first time in her writing career it took her almost two years to write her next three volume novel<sup>91</sup>. The author also fell seriously ill after the publication of *Moths*, and the fact that the type was broken up and the early cheap one-volume edition priced at five shillings, must have only added to Ouida's

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<sup>90</sup> I say ‘possibly’ because Chapman and Hall's ledgers and contract files have not survived to this day. However, in a letter from Rose to Ouida on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 1870 we are informed that the author received £800 from Chapman and Hall for *Folle-Farine* (1871) which could indicate the approximate amount she would receive for a novel around that time. This letter is in the Berg Collection in the folder consisting of Rose's correspondence, under ‘Memoranda for agreements’. I have not transcribed this letter.

<sup>91</sup> Ouida was writing *Moths* for almost two years but she did not publish any volumes in between, whereas after *Moths*, she wrote *Pipistrello and Other Stories* (1880, one volume of short stories), *A Village Commune* (1881, two volumes) and *Bimbi and Other Stories* (1882, one volume of short stories).

frustration and exhaustion (Appendix, lt. 16)<sup>92</sup>. Although Chatto tried to quieten Ouida “no amount of abusive letters, however, could remedy the breaking-up of Moths type and Ouida sank back into gloom” (Bigland, 1950: 155). So, when she eventually wrote *In Maremma*, the novel had little in comparison to her previous two three-decker novels (*Friendship* and *Moths*), in terms of content, as will be seen in this chapter. With *In Maremma*, Ouida returned for the last time in the nineteenth century to her Italian peasant novels, the latest one being *Signa*, written in 1875 and the last one being *Waters of Edera* published in 1900. The fact that after so many years she decided to revisit a former motif and narrative form cannot be ignored especially since the writer received for *Friendship* and *Moths* approximately £1100 for each novel, one of the highest prices she had ever received<sup>93</sup>. This indicates that, although a renowned spendthrift, with the publication of *In Maremma*, she decided to change her ‘injurious’ writing style, most probably to please her publishers and quieten Mudie and her reviewers.

This chapter will demonstrate the disappointment Ouida felt as an artist, not in herself, but towards her male dominated circle of publishers and critics, as well as the way in which Musa’s character echoes Ouida’s artistic concerns. However, before entering this discussion, the examination of Ouida’s ‘amended’ plot will precede. Schroeder and Holt note that “In this final Italian novel, Ouida significantly revises the gothic tradition to reflect a fantasy of female empowerment undercut by realities of patriarchal oppression [...] Ouida employs traditional gothic motifs [...] in unique ways to signify the heroine’s ultimately futile renunciation of conventional female roles” (Schroeder and Holt, 2008: 153). In contrast to the above argument,

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<sup>92</sup> Bigland writes that each volume of the three-decker *Moths* was priced at three guineas, which is an exorbitant amount. The biographer possibly meant three ‘shillings’ rather than ‘guineas’ per volume, which was a significant decline (due to the one-volume copy), since the original edition would be priced at approximately ten shillings per volume (152).

<sup>93</sup> These findings are according to Nieman’s charts in her Master’s dissertation “Recasting A Victorian Woman Writer: Chatto and Windus’ Letters to Ouida” (1994) held at The University of Reading.

this chapter will come to discuss how Ouida revises her past Italian plots by implementing classical mythology in order to mirror images of not only female victimisation but also female authority that is eventually shattered by the male characters. With the employment of myths, Ouida does not depict a heroine who repudiates traditional roles, but a girl who struggles to balance these with unconventional ones.

Indeed, Musa, possessing Folle-Farine's wildness and Giojà's (*Ariadne*) powerful sense of independence, is a more vigorous and self-determined character than, and to a certain extent an enhanced adaptation of, both Folle-Farine and Giojà. *In Maremma* exhibits Ouida's most morbid ending, reminiscent of that in Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk*; in squalid vaults both Musa and Antonia die by the dagger of those who instigated their ruin and like Agnes, Musa stands next to her putrefying baby. Despite its grimness, *In Maremma* was considered one of the writer's greatest achievements and, as mentioned in the beginning of this essay, its success was most probably due to the change in Ouida's style after the commotion *Moths* created. Ouida herself did not hide the fact that *In Maremma* was somewhat a compromise<sup>94</sup> and even though she conformed in order to satisfy her publishers and readers, critics were still—although much less than usual—displeased with her work.

This is apparent in the first review of *In Maremma* was written on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1882 in *The Academy*. The reviewer considers the novel remarkable and forceful but “not free from the author's besetting sin of extravagance” (*The Academy*, 1882: 228). *The Academy*'s article is quite similar to that written in July in *British Quarterly*, in which Ouida's proficiency in depicting nature is the main highlight. Both articles are brief commentaries of Ouida's novel. They are more like summaries of each novel and censures to her oeuvre in general. According to *The Nation and the Athenaeum* (merged in 1921) it was quite common for reviewers not to read

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<sup>94</sup> See page 184 or the Appendix, letter 28.

the works they eventually reviewed, thus labelled as hack reviewers, those who cannot read most of the books they review for “they can earn a living only by reviewing more books than they have time to read” (*The Nation and the Athenaeum*, 1922: 693). This could be the case for these reviews since their arguments are supported by generic statements and they do not delve into the text itself. The fact that *The Academy* was almost always the first periodical to review Ouida’s novels a few days after their publication and that Ouida did not think highly of it might be an indication of the volume of its credibility: “Pray be so good as to advertise the Times after Maremma not the Academy” (Appendix, lt. 26). In the *British Quarterly Review* the only thematic comment made in the article concerning the actual novel in question is that Ouida “does not aim at truth to human nature, but rather at a blind monstrosity” and thus her characters are deemed “unrealizable” (*BQR*, 1882: 229). Indeed, Ouida’s characters if viewed as mirroring real-life Victorians, are quite unconvincing and this was most probably the writer’s intention: to coalesce fiction and fact.

In the *Athenaeum*, the review of *In Maremma*, (published on the same day of that in *The Academy*) begins with a comment on Ouida’s previous novel, *A Village Commune* (1881), which is also regarded as dull and sentimental (*Athenaeum*, 1882: 410). The reviewer writes that with *A Village Commune*, Ouida “led her readers to hope that she was improving a little”. This comment is a probable reference to *Moths* (1880) which although considered Ouida’s best work of literature, it received diverse but mainly harsh criticism from the press for its social and sexual critique of upper-class Victorian lifestyle. Moreover, while Ouida was often accused of being hyperbolic in her description of the natural world and inaccurate in her depiction of Italian life, this article explicitly endorses these ideas. The reviewer states that “it is not possible to regard her as a safe guide for original observer so long as she calls a bird of which the prevailing colour

is black “the silver-plunged guillemot”, and turns the “fatidice Manto” of Virgil into “Mantus, the grim god of the land of shades”. However, concerning the guillemot, it has been noticed that in the winter the black plumage this particular species of birds changes to a grey mottled appearance and “has distinctive dark wedge intruding into white wing patch; wing linings are silver-gray” (Shaw, 1823: 539 and Farrand, 1983: 114). While in the case of Mantus, Ouida here is not referring to Virgil’s Manto but rather to the Etruscan god of death or the dead according to Italian historian Raffaele Pettazzoni (Pettazzoni, 1954: 107). Similarly, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1902 characterises the god Mantus as grim, —the adjective Ouida also uses—a ruler of the underworld (Kellogg, 1902: 637). The reviewer seems to focus a little too much on encyclopaedic erudition rather than the literary appraisal. The only substantial comment on the writer’s narrative is his reproach of the lascivious and callous content of *In Maremma* in which, “there are cruelty and lust enough in it to satisfy one of Juvenal’s ladies” (*Athenaeum*, 1882: 410). In reference to this remark, apart from Este, who only becomes heartless at the end when he abandons Musa, her other two suitors and her father Saturnino do not display or represent either cruelty or lust in the novel. Saturnino is a brigand and his viciousness is somewhat justified by the lower class since he is considered a hero of the poor, an amalgam of Robin Hood and Rob Roy and Musa’s suitors court her steadily and remain devoted and respectful to her throughout the novel.

The next article published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the same year and month, although quite favourable towards *In Maremma*, is rather sarcastic. According to the reviewer it would be in the reader’s best interest if Ouida produced writings concerning lower classes in Italian settings rather than higher classes: “When she (Ouida) attempts to show the life of upper or middle classes in France and England the conscientious reader’s personal knowledge is too



openly challenged and insulted” (*PMG*, 1882: 5). It is implied thus that since Ouida’s readers do not possess any knowledge of Italian rusticity, they are hence satisfied with its portrayal given that it “does not attempt political economy or metaphysics or the criticism of literature” (5). However, the reviewer does compliment Ouida for her graphic landscapes and delineations of her characters: “To speak more seriously, the pictures of Maremma life and scenery in this book are really good. By whatever means, a singular and striking country and people are brought vividly before the reader’s eyes. That tis something; indeed, if one considers the numbers of artists in language who fail signally to accomplish it, perhaps it is a great deal” (5). It is also noted in the article that Musa resembles Folle-Farine and Giojà which is indeed the case since all three girls were lower class peasants, very independent, orphaned or with one physically or emotionally absent parents, and residing in European countries other than United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

The reviewer goes on to refer to certain correct inaccuracies in Ouida’s novel such as “pseudoetus” instead of pseudæetus, a particular species of eagles, and “laena” instead of leaena, which means lioness in Greek (Ouida, 1882: 29, Vol. I and 227, Vol. III). However, in several letters to Chatto and Windus, —one even concerning *In Maremma*,— dated from 1880 up until 1883, Ouida often complained about the laxity of their typists and printers, Spottiswoode and Co.:

I fear Spottiswoode is very careless. I cannot conceive how an Index could be made up without the misarrangements being discovered. (Appendix, lt. 12)

It is 3 months since Spottiswoode had the last chapter to print in type. I hope you will never place another book in the hands of these dilatory and inattentive printers. (Appendix, lt. 14)

I regret Spottiswoode has no good Reader; there are so many [?] printers' errors such as the Scylla such as no author should have the trouble of correcting. In the last pages of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of *In Maremma* wondered is printed wandered. (Appendix, lt. 32)

Thus, the misspellings the reviewer rightly identifies could have merely been typist's misprints rather than the writer's orthographical mistakes. Additionally, although stated otherwise in the article, the word "Parthenaic" which Ouida employs in her text does indeed exist as a word and is often accompanied by the noun frieze in nineteenth century books and journals, whereas the word "Italiote" is again correctly applied by Ouida and it refers to a "person of Greek descent dwelling in ancient Italy; an inhabitant of Magna Græcia" according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Ouida, 1882: 83, Vol. II and 281, Vol. III) (*OED*, 1989). The reviewer closes the article with a positive comment, possibly to appease the writer and the faithful reader by praising Ouida's picturesque scenery and vivid ambience that leave "a considerate and enduring impression on the mind", a characteristic of her writing—and possibly the only one— which everyone seemed to appreciate (*PMG*, 1882: 5).

As in the case of the *Athenaeum*, *The Morning Post* a few days later also observes that Ouida abandons her previous style in *A Village Commune* and perpetuates this new trajectory in *In Maremma*. The reviewer calls it "unquestionably one of the most artistic novels that has appeared in a long time". The reviewer also compares Ouida's passion, love for nature and vehement characters to those of the Brontës while Ouida's depiction of Italian peasant life is characterised as poetic and truthful; Ouida's sketches of desolation and narrow-mindedness are considered "painfully accurate" (*The Morning Post*, 1882: 2, col. B). Ouida's Musa is ranked with George Sand's *Consuelo* (1842-1843) and *Petite Fadette* (1849), Charlotte Brontë's Shirley (1841), Sir Walter Scott's Lucy Ashton in *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), H.J. Moore's Nell

in *Wild Nell: The White Mountain Girl* (1860), Henrietta Anne Puff's *Virginia* (1877) and Anthony Trollope's Nina in *Nina Balatka: The Story of a Maiden of Prague* (1867).

The reviewer notes that although the incidents in the novel are "few and far between [...]" the interest does not decrease, but is kept up to the end and there is not a single page which is not worth reading" (2, col. C). The only fault the reviewer finds *In Maremma* is that "it lacks variety and contrast, it is sad from beginning to end [...] Had a lighter, even more comic, element been introduced from time to time, the general effect would have been increased" (2, col. C). However, the suspense and lingering threat of Musa and Este being discovered in the Etruscan tombs as well as the unannounced visits of her other admirers seem to compensate for the lack of humorous incidents which would possibly be incongruous with the plot. Nevertheless, when Musa first resided in the tombs she befriends a little boy shepherd called Zirlo, who is quite a facetious and silly character and makes the girl very happy. In addition, the Sicilian, one of Musa's suitors is quite a comic figure with his passionate temperament and straightforwardness the first time they meet:

'Maiden, where I come from the land is beautiful as the sea is; the shores laugh; the hills are rich as a mother's breasts for her first-born; men and women live on fruit and wine, and song and love; yet not in my own Sicilia did ever I see so handsome a maiden as art thou!'

'I took your fruit, friend, because you gave me it with good friendliness; if you clog it with lies, I will fling it in the waves.'

The Sicilian stared at her hard with his brown starry eyes; then he laughed all over his face.

'Lies? I said never a truer word. But if it displease you, so much the wiser are you. Tell me, who are you? Nay, do tell me, I pray of you.'

'I am no one,' said Musa, curtly. 'They call me the Musoncella and the Velia. Go you back to your ship, and leave me to go home.'

'Where is your home?'

'On the moors; miles inland.'

'May I visit you there?'

'No.'

‘I am Daniello the son of Febo, of the house of Villamagna. I have been a seaman all my days, and now I command the brig yonder, and own part of her too, my fair Ausiliatrice; as good a brig as there sails on the high seas, trading with fruit as far as the misty cold northern coasts. That is all. But it is enough. I would not change with princes. I am my own master; and yonder, in my island, I have withal to keep a wife in comfort. Now, look you, if you will be that wife I will be a happy man. What say you?’ [...] ‘Go back and say that to your Sicilian maidens. You remind me well that I have spoken too long to a stranger.’ [...]

‘As Gesu lives I speak in seriousness, and swear you honest love. One flash of your eyes to mine was enough; that is how we love in Sicilia. My eyes to your heart say nothing, alas! alas! But this I swear to you, oh cruel one and unjust! I pass by here in four months’ time with my cargo from the Scotch shores. Here I will land, and, if you will meet me, I will say the same again, and you shall go back with me to my isle, and we will build you a nest in the fig-tree and the cactus-hedge of my own shore. There is my hand on it, as I am Daniello, son of Febo, of the house of Villa-magna’. (Ouida, 1882, 4-6, Vol. II)

This dialogue is quite amusing due to the Sicilian’s confidence that Musa will be his wife minutes after they meet, as well as Musa’s abruptness, symptomatic of her ignorance concerning the flattering arts of courtship. The reviewer ends the article with considerable optimism: “Long after the majority of its gifted author’s stories are forgotten, ‘In Maremma’ will be read, and will yield in return great, even if mournful, pleasure. Lord Lytton was very right when he detected the spark of true genius in Ouida” (*The Morning Post*, 1882: 2, col. C). Indeed in a letter sent in 1871 to Rose, Ouida writes: “What do you think of ‘Folle-Farine’? I am very anxious to know. Lord Lytton thinks it is work of ‘rare genius’ – a great ‘prose poem’” (Appendix, lt. 70). Although not referring to *In Maremma*, the novel is clearly a ‘reconstruction’ of *Folle-Farine*, and the reviewer obviously refers to such a successful and well-known writer as Lord Lytton in order to connect his approbation of the latter novel to that of the one under scrutiny.

The next review is from the *Daily News* on the same year and begins by acknowledging Ouida’s reputation: “No many modern writers have been more criticised in an adverse sense than she who writes under the name ‘Ouida’” (*Daily News*, 1882: 2, col. C). The reviewer characteristically says that she has been analysed “worse than any murder” and that this led to

her popularity in circulating libraries. Ouida's passion is discussed once again and the sensation she offers, although "sometimes unwholesome [...] people will run that risk as a change from the chopped straw of the ordinary fiction of the day" (*The Morning Post*, 1882: 2, col. C). Ouida did in fact scarcely write conventional or agreeable plots—and certainly not jovial endings—whose impudence enticed the reader away from foreseeable and socially orthodox storylines. And although *In Maremma* was not as popular as *Moths*, according to the reviewer thankfully the novel under discussion has nothing in comparison "with the low cynicism which made *Moths* so degraded and degrading", "when Ouida writes of the society and the world she is harmful" (*Daily News*, 1882: 2, col. C).

The fact that these reviews do not comment on Ouida's use of mythology can only demonstrate that by then critics were more focused or mesmerised by the unconventionality of Ouida's writing, whether a positive or negative feature of it. *In Maremma*, brimful of mythological allusions and reminiscent of a Greek tragedy, is certainly abundant with coincidences, uncanny incidents and secrets which are never unveiled. Notably, the name Musa derives from the ancient Greek word *μοῦσα* and refers to a woman who inspires poets. In *Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology*, Geoffrey Miles suggests that, unlike the Renaissance and the Romantics who employed classical myths in their works "to deal with contemporary concerns", late Victorians, "aware of looking back at it over a vast abyss of time and change, see it as a refuge from drab contemporary reality" (Miles, 1999: 14). Ouida's inclusion of mythology in this novel agrees with Miles's argument, since in that its implementation serves as a haven, the only trajectory for the continuation of the author's ostensibly injurious novels which as such dealt with existing anxieties. Referring, in particular, to the midst of the century Miles also writes that:

[...] as the century goes on, mythology comes to seem increasingly marginal. On the one side the ‘creed outworn’ was once again being challenged by Christianity [...] On the other hand, the modern world of ‘getting and spending’, industrialism, commerce, science, political reform, and empire, made the old myths seem increasingly remote and irrelevant”. (13-14)<sup>95</sup>

Even though she was a prolific and popular writer, due mainly to her unconventionality and denigration of the upper classes, the word ‘marginal’ is an adjective which perfectly corresponds to Ouida’s niche in the literary hierarchy. As in the case of *Folle-Farine* (1871) and *Ariadne* (1877), in *In Maremma* the authoress espouses classical mythology and paganism, but to a much greater extent, which often rendered her style antiquated; as a nineteenth century critic writes: “And, all the while, I never lose interest in her story, constructed with that sound professional knowledge, which the romancers of this later generation, with their vague and halting modes, would probably regard as old-fashioned.” (Hudson, 1897: 500). It was in fact the early twentieth century which “brought myth back to startling life and relevance precisely by shattering that nineteenth-century image of idealised beauty and serenity” (Miles 1999: 14)<sup>96</sup>. So, while Ouida fictionalised her thoughts and reflections of society and so contributed to her marginalisation, she also chose to convey her ideas through rather archaic subjects, such as mythology, which, as in the case of *Moths*, seemed to offer merely ephemeral popularity, diminishing a probable canonisation of her work.

In particular, Ouida employed a certain type of female mythological figures: the angelic, delicate or less wicked ones. However, in the beginning of the novel, Musa is likened to Artemis, the goddess of hunting:

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<sup>95</sup> With the phrase ‘creed outworn’ Miles here is referring to Greek paganism (13).

<sup>96</sup> Concerning “the early twentieth century”, Miles here is referring —amongst others—to James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* as well as Sigmund Freud’s and Carl Jung’s interpretation of myths.

In that free life she grew still taller and still stronger, slender and supple, and fit model for a young Artemis, had any sculptor been there to copy the fine and graceful lines of her limbs in the modelling clay that comes from Tiber. (Ouida, 1882: 308, Vol. I)

From Ouida's description, it seems as if this is a fleeting moment in Maremma as a child when she is yet happy and without worries. Musa is compared to Artemis once more by Sanctis:

This creature, who seemed to him so beautiful, so fearless, and so redundant of animated life that she appeared a very incarnation of Artemis, was happy as she now was, innocent as the wild doe of her own oak-glades, and bold enough to defend her innocence were it menaced. (47, Vol. II)

In both scenes, the girl is seen through the eyes of other men and not by or in the presence of her lover, with whom her demeanour alters. When Musa first nurses Este, he wonders whether the girl is afraid of walking upon the moors on her own and Ouida compares her to Demeter, the goddess of agriculture and grain:

'I have my knife,' she said curtly; then, tired as she was, she turned away to light wood for a fire, and put the meat she had brought into water, making graceful this homely work by her own simplicity and grace as women did in days of old, when great Demeter herself thought household cares no shame [...] It was she who gathered the wood and the fir-apples; it was she who cut the dry heather to keep for fuel; it was she who fished, who span, who worked in all ways, who brought heavy loads upon her shoulders and shared her refuge with him, disdaining any personal fear or harm. (175-176)

Although the image of Musa here is of a self-reliant and robust girl, she is not compared to Artemis, who is "inviolable and vigorous, and also grants strength and health to others", neither to Hebe, the goddess of youth who, according to geographer and historian Pausanias, "offered forgiveness for wrongdoing", to prisoners in particular (Smith, 1844: 375 and Littleton, 2005: 616). Although Musa is a huntress in the presence of others and becomes one only for Este, whom she nurses even though he is an outlaw, Ouida chooses to associate her with a more motherly figure, Demeter.

Frank Miller Turner, another historian, wrote in his work *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* that eminent personas of the late Victorian era, such as John Grote, Walter Pater and Andrew Lang regarded Demeter as “the Mater Dolorosa of Greek mythology” while Alfred Tennyson “portrayed her as the epitome of motherhood” (Turner, 1984: 120). Pater depicts Demeter as a goddess and priestess “who appears in the hymn as a teacher of rites, converting the quotidian processes of life into religious solemnity”, whereas, Ouida’s portrayal of the deity through Musa complies with that of Tennyson’s, a motherly figure (Radford, 2007: 76):

Child, when thou wert gone,  
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
 Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of thee  
 Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave  
 Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
 And set the mother waking in amaze  
 To find her sick one whole; And out from all the night an answer shrill'd,  
 'We know not, and we know not why we wail'.  
 I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
 And ask'd the waves that moan about the world  
 'Where? do ye make your moaning for my child?'  
 And round from all the world the voices came  
 'We know not, and we know not why we moan'.  
 'Where?' and I stared from every eagle-peak,  
 I thridded the black heart of all the woods,  
 I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the storms  
 Of Autumn swept across the city, and heard  
 The murmur of their temples chanting me,  
 Me, me, the desolate Mother! 'Where?' - and turn'd,  
 And fled by many a waste, forlorn of man,  
 And grieved for man thro' all my grief for thee, -  
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,  
 The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,  
 The scorpion crawling over naked skulls;



(Tennyson, 1907: 784)

Tennyson describes a woman who travels around the world to find her daughter, Persephone, and save her from a life in the underworld. Similarly, Ouida's female protagonist travels for the sake of her lover, on foot, from the Maremma region, which is in the south-west of Italy, to Mantua, which is the central north, in order to prevent her father from killing Este. Ouida's parallelism of Musa and Demeter is a paradigm of the author's critical standpoint regarding the roles of mid-nineteenth century women. Although Musa's strength is comparable to Demeter's, the fact that Ouida chooses to liken Musa to a mother who is unable to save her child shows that she cannot escape her motherly instincts or the men that dictate her life.

When Musa's baby dies after birth, she is imprisoned for infanticide, perhaps rendering the reference to Demeter as a foreshadowing or a symbol of the loss of a child and the role of the mother. According to the Offences against the Person Act 1875:

If any Woman shall be delivered of a Child, every Person who shall, by any secret Disposition of the dead Body of the said Child, whether such Child died before, at, or after its Birth, endeavour to conceal the Birth thereof, shall be guilty of a Misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable, at the Discretion of the Court, to be imprisoned for any Term not exceeding Two Years. (*A Collection*, 1861, 396)

The death of a child, therefore, fell upon the mother and particularly in the case of single mother. According to C.M.A. McCauliff: "In Victorian England unwed mothers were practically forced to give up their babies" (Adamec, 2007: xxiii). Ouida not only depicts a 'fallen' woman but also a woman who initially is assumed without a doubt responsible for the death of her baby and immediately incarcerated, conveying in this way the burdens woman of her time bore.

While Ouida associates Musa with Demeter, a mother laden by grief for the abduction of her daughter Persephone, she also compares the two young women. Musa's descent to the Etruscan tombs is reminiscent of Persephone's descent to the underworld. According to the

‘Homeric Hymns’, Hades abducts the young goddess but after Demeter’s plea to Zeus—Persephone’s father—the chthonic god frees her upon his command. However, before leaving, Persephone is tricked into eating pomegranate seeds which bind her to the underworld forever. It is then agreed amongst Zeus and Hades that the young deity will return to the world of the living for eight months every year (March-October). In *Persephone Rises: 1860 - 1927; Mythography, Gender, and the Creation of a New Spirituality* Margot Kathleen Louis writes that Persephone “could function as a mythological correlative for the alienated psyche, whether she was depicted as helplessly imprisoned in the underworld or, more hopefully, as struggling to find her way out of it; her ascent from the underworld became an ascent out of the condition of deathliness, a psychic regeneration” (Louis, 2009: 123). Indeed, Persephone could be regarded as a personification of imprisonment and forced or arranged marriages, topics, which as mentioned in previous chapters, Ouida engaged with. Specifically, in *In Maremma* the writer focuses mostly on Musa’s mental confinement and through the implementation of the myth women’s bondage to men is intimated and implicitly criticised.

Louis also offers a chronological development of the myth in Victorian literature:

Victorian Persephones were generally either embodiments of despair and death or else consorts of Hades; they were rarely connected with the victim of seduction or rape who appears so prominently in the socially conscious literature of the age. Only in the literature of the *fin de siècle* and the early Modernist period does it become common to represent Persephone as a rape victim. (87)

Although a *fin de siècle* novel, *In Maremma* does not employ Persephone as a rape victim but as an epitome of physical beauty and incarceration:

She was a pomegranate-flower blooming in the wilderness; a paradise-bird captive in a cellar. He felt a fool, and guilty, because he had been unable to gather the flower, and too weak to persuade the bird that liberty and light were without. (Ouida, 1882: 65, 106, Vol.II)

[...] the memory of Musa was with him, potent and intoxicating as the fumes of strong wine; her coldness, her scorn, her strength enhanced her beauty of person to him. The dangerous race she sprang from gave her a mystery and a magic the more. To the northern mind and worldly knowledge of Sanctis this lineage had seemed the most terrible of all inheritance. But to the Sicilian it made her look the lovelier; as Persephone looked to her lover when the darkness of the shades was about her instead of the flowering fields. That in her veins ran the bold, fierce blood of the Mastarna of the Apennine rocks was but a reason the more for him to long to bear her away on the deck of his own good brig, and dwell with her under the dark green orange-groves beside his own blue sea, and make her the happy mother of dauntless children who would ride the waves like the dolphin and nautilus. (106, Vol. II)

In the two excerpts above, Sanctis's and the Sicilian's impression of Musa are respectively outlined. Both men perceive her as a beauty that needs to be 'gathered' or 'bore away'. While Musa lives alone in the tombs and is not dependent upon a man, Sanctis and the Sicilian consider her life a prison. Sanctis sees her as a lonely and captive Persephone, whereas the Sicilian is captivated by that dark beauty which resembles the goddess when she resides in the underworld.

Specifically, in Victorian poetry, where the figure of Persephone was more often encountered, her myth is linked to matters such as "Women's struggles and suffering in a male-dominated society—their position in marriage, their experience of rape, the breaking of the bond between mother and daughter", all of them being issues which exhibited women's depreciation in the Victorian age (Louis, 2009: 41). In Ouida's novel, Este's view of Musa is equally belittling:

A great catastrophe had shaken all his previous life to pieces, and plunged it into utter darkness. It seemed to him as if he had awakened in some other planet than the familiar earth. But he was too feeble to reflect long or to ask more. She made him think of those immortals of whom he had read in Greek and Latin and in marbles; they who moved through earth compassionate, yet aloof from love. As she stood before him in the gloom, clothed in her tunic of white wool, and with the birds of night about her, he thought of Persephone, of Nausicaa, of the nymphs looking on whom a man grew mad — of all old-world tales of beings who were on earth, not of it. Yet they were humble cares she had for him. She made his fire, she made his bread, she made his soup; she wove linen for him; she sought far and wide for roots and berries and mushrooms such as he could eat. Sometimes she went down to the sea and netted fish for him; at night,

by the solitary lamp, she spun and sewed diligently to replace the garments of his prison that he wore.  
(Ouida, 1882: 124, Vol. II)

Even though Este envisions a deity when observing Musa, she is again likened to the chthonic Persephone, dwelling in *her* underground tombs and having only one purpose: to tend to her lover's needs. Ouida applies the image of the woman as carer and mythologises it in an attempt to demythologise stereotypical depictions of mid-nineteenth century women.

In the aforementioned quote, Ouida presents another mythological figure, princess Nausicaa, with whom Musa is juxtaposed, and who, according to Homer, found Odysseus and nursed his wounds during one of his shipwrecks. Comparably, Musa finds a dying Este, who also seeks refuge:

She left him, and made a bed of moss and leaves in the innermost chamber of the tombs; she filled one of the black vases with the thin wine of Joconda's store, and put it with some bread beside the bed; she lit a little wick in a little oil in one of the Etruscan lamps, and set it in the place; she went to the spring that welled through the passage beyond, and filled a big copper vessel with it for a bath. 'That is all I can do,' she thought, intent on her preparations as Nausicaa for her hero from the sea. It was a pleasure to have some one to serve and to defend 'Can you walk to the spot?' she said to him. 'If not, lean on me; I am strong.' 'I think I can walk,' he said, embarrassed somewhat because she was not so; and he rose and dragged himself feebly into the third chamber. (93-94, Vol. II)

Nausicaa, in the safe shelter of her father's halls, had never tended Odysseus with more serenity and purity than the daughter of Saturnino tended his fellow-slave. (200, Vol. II)

Unlike when Musa shelters her father in the tombs, here it is a 'pleasure' for her to 'serve' Este since she is enamoured of him. Ouida selects another motherly figure to describe Musa's role, as well as a mythological character who is not a deity herself. However, Nausicaa, like Musa, serves as a magical intervention, a *deus ex machina*, since Athena sends a dream to the princess telling her to wash her clothes on the seashore where she afterwards uncannily encounters Odysseus. Ouida's depiction of Musa as a maternal nurse reiterates her image of the mid-

Victorian woman who was expected to protect and serve men; through a discussion of Gaskell's 'fallen' mothers, Deborah A. Logan argues: "[...] women of all economic and moral ranks may expect no more than the privilege of serving others, an endorsement of the separate-spheres ideology in which women's individual autonomy has no place" (Logan, 1998: 90). Indeed, Este can only see a domestic creature in Musa:

She was only his servant to him; he did not see his ministering angel in her. He did not see that glory as of a young goddess which was about her buoyant feet and her close-curved head for the eyes of Maurice Sanctis and of the Sicilian mariner (Ouida, 1882: 121, Vol. II)

While Sanctis and the Sicilian view Musa as a desirable woman, Este is unable to see anything more than a subservient girl. After weeks of being feverish and delirious, and Musa tending to his gun-shot wounds, Este is able to fathom her function as a *deus ex machina*, but doubts his feelings and eventually forgets:

A vague sense of shame stole on him. Did he love this other now, he who in the moonlit luminous Mantuan nights had sworn his love eternal as the stars? Was this new-born passion love indeed? Or was it not the mere pulsation of reviving senses, the mere covetousness of a thing born only of the knowledge that others coveted it? For months she had been beside him, and been no more to him than a generous boy who should have so defended and laboured for him would have been. For months he had seen her and heard her, and let her go and come, with no perception of her sex or of her youth, because his eyes were tired and his heart was sick. But all at once he saw, and his dulled desires leaped from their ashes into fire, because other men also saw, other men also desired. But for them he would still have let her go by him, the unnoticed Nausicaa of his bitter Odyssey (27-28, Vol. II)

Ouida again compares Musa to Nausicaa in order to portray her dutiful role and the fact that although in love and 'unnoticed', she continues hiding and attending to Este.

Although, with her portrayal of mythological figures such as Nausicaa, Ouida altered her plot significantly upon Chatto and Windus's request, it is still overflowing with social concerns, which are in turn cloaked with subtlety and pessimism. Louis writes that "[...]

depending on how the myth is manipulated in each version, Persephone combines aspects of the rape victim, the fallen woman and the wife; she is a medium by which writers can explore male-female dynamics, social anxieties relating to sex, and the institution of marriage in its more sombre aspects” (Louis, 2009: 134). This can be attributed to the other female deities Ouida incorporates in her novel, since Nausicaa and Demeter share several of these features.

### THE SINGER AND THE WRITER

Apart from her views and opinions of society, Ouida was also famous for employing her personal thoughts and experiences in her novels<sup>97</sup>. Musa, the protagonist of *In Maremma* could be viewed as a self-representation of Ouida herself. Ouida is a pariah in London, a foreigner in Florence, an artist, an exemplar of the emancipated woman; she has abandoned her home place, is raised without her father and estranged from him as an adult. Similarly, Musa is an outsider in Maremma due to her unknown (to the villagers) origins; she sings exquisitely, concocts her own poems while playing the mandoline and weaves regularly on her spinning wheel; she is highly autonomous, monetarily and emotionally, when she lives in Maremma; she is also brought up without a father and is entirely oblivious of his whereabouts throughout her life. The similarities between the two are discernible and by implementing mythological figures Ouida is also tapping into the idea of art and the artist and thus mythologises them.

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<sup>97</sup> Corrèze in *Moths* was thought to be Mario, a tenor whom Ouida was infatuated with and Prince Ioris in *Friendship* a representation of her only known and assumed lover, Marchese della Stufa, a court officer of the King of Italy.

Musa's name in *In Maremma* is one of Ouida's first allusions to herself, since it is a nickname like 'Ouida' and Musa is not only a muse as her name implies but also an artist. Nicknames become a pattern in her novels, such as *Folle-Farine*, *The Massarenes*, *Under Two Flags*, etc., adding a brief story behind every nickname, as in her case. Musa, in *In Maremma*, who is baptised Maria—like Ouida's first name Marie—is an abbreviation of the girl's other nickname Musoncella Velia, which means scornful seagull, possibly a delineation of Musa's personality since she often expresses disdain towards the villagers and regularly 'flew away' from the town to evade them. Ouida's protagonist is named Maria, from the Virgin Mary, but her relish for solitude and nature, rather than the companionship of other children, impels the villagers to name her Musoncella Velia. Just Ouida's name has a childish origin, similarly Musa's is concocted by children, a correlation which could suggest Musa being a projection of the author's persona.

According to her name, as a muse the girl mesmerises three men throughout the novel and although she is not an artistic inspiration per se, she becomes a source of stimulus, diverse for each of them. For Sanctis and the Sicilian, Musa incarnates love and beauty and becomes Sanctis's demise, while in Este she inspires a will to live. Sanctis, a painter and a relative of Joconda's, who appears after her death, is riveted by Musa's vivacity and beauty, a yearning that empowers him with a virtuosity of speech and a will in accomplishing his aspirations. He is the one who tenaciously sets off to Mantua to exonerate Este for Musa's sake and the attainment of her happiness. He effectively accomplishes only to die of fever a few days later. Sanctis derives from the Latin word *sanctus* which means sacred and the fact that the name is in dative plural instead of nominative singular is intriguing, since Sanctis is never rewarded for his *sacred* deeds. Prior to his acquaintance with Este, he frequently visits Musa in his hope of persuading her to

move with him to Paris: “With all the eloquence that sincere longing to succeed could inspire in him, he used every argument he could think of to shake her resolution, and induce her to trust herself to another land and to another life” (Ouida, 1882: 58, Vol. II). However, due to her adamant manner, Musa seems to serve as an anti-muse for Sanctis:

Under his touch now his Eros became too entirely the incarnation of spiritual love, his Psyche too entirely the embodiment of the soul; but the myth lost none of its grace and gained a holiness not its own under his treatment. But, for the first time, his heart was not in the work of his hand. He had not his usual interest in his creations. He had his usual fine thought, delicate touch, subtle meaning in what grew beneath the sweep of his brush, but for ever between him and the fresco came the remembrance of the Musoncella and of Maremma. As he drew the gold curls and fair face of his Psyche, he saw always the dark and brilliant face of that daughter of the Etruscan Mastarna. As he painted the Greek portico, the cool airium, the dark green of orange and myrtle touching white marble, he saw only the red glow of the tufa soil, the amethyst and sapphire of the mountains, the dusk of the silent tombs, the lustre of the eyes of the offspring of Saturnine (81, Vol. I).

The painter seems to be asphyxiated by his love for Musa, thereupon, suppressing his creativity. Again the imagery of ancient Greek mythical figures, such as Eros and Psyche<sup>98</sup>, illustrate Sanctis’s passion for Musa and comparison of her to the latter goddess alongside her Etruscan lineage evinces her dark and frigid psyche as Sanctis experiences it, as an artist and a forlorn lover. Sanctis shows pride and humility, traits Ouida ascribes to artists like herself, when he decides to uncover the truth concerning the death of Este’s mistress and by doing so he acknowledges that he will suffer the loss of the woman he loves. According to Ouida, his actions

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<sup>98</sup> Eros (or Cupid) means love (Gk. ἐρως) and Psyche, soul (Gk. ψυχή). “Venus had ordered Cupid to punish Psyche because her beauty was attracting *worshippers* away from the goddess, but *Cupid fell in love* with her instead. He visited her every night in the dark, only forbidding her to look on him. Tempted by curiosity and fear, she lit a lamp one night to see him sleeping; a falling drop of oil woke him, and he vanished. Psyche searched the world for her lost lover, and fell into the hand of vengeful Venus, who imposed a series of cruel tasks. At last, however, Cupid returned to claim his bride, Venus was pacified and Psyche became a goddess” (Miles, 1999: 40).



are justified by means of his artistic temperament, a temperament that cannot be comprehended by non-geniuses, a rather arrogant opinion which Ouida openly expressed<sup>99</sup>.

Both Ouida and Musa ostensibly led the life they desired but are in fact criticised for the secluded path they chose. When Ouida abandoned the axis of the literary scene, London, and Musa, a home and an inheritance which was rightfully hers, they were deemed scornful and scorned. According to Ouida “Only in the eyes of this creature (Musa), who was called a penitent ere she had sinned any sin, there was a rebellious light, and in the arched mouth there was a resolute scorn that the masters did not put into their young servitors” (Ouida, 1882 :73-74, Vol. I). Ouida attributed Musa’s scorn to the blood of her bandit father running through her veins, as Ouida’s scorn for England can be ascribed to the Francophilia she felt due to her father’s origins and profession. Musa, however, is not only viewed as scornful but also as spawning sentiments of contempt:

‘One would have thought to know who that wench is now,’ they grumbled to one another, and some of the women said: ‘She has got no name. That is odd. Do you mind of the time when Saturnino was taken up in the hills yonder? Some did think then the girl was Saturnino's daughter. But Joconda was always so close.’ (240, Vol. I).

Because of her unknown origin the girl is regarded as an outcast and thus disrespected when Joconda, her only guardian dies. Just as several lady novelists in the Victorian era were more respected for their family name and rank in society, Musa would receive the villagers’s fervent acknowledgments if it were revealed that she is the child of Saturnino: “The people would make an idol of their hero's offspring [...] Joconda feared no scorn and unkindness on the score of her

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<sup>99</sup> In a letter to Chatto and Windus on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 1878 Ouida writes: “As for the Press, remember all my reputation has been made in the teeth of the snarling jealousyes and columnees of the newspaper tribe of “small talents” and on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1879: “I think it should be the first article in the number of the magazine, because you have no author there of equal rank in Literature with myself” (Appendix, Lt. 5).

birth for the child; if that birth were known” (Ouida, 1882: 68-69, Vol. I). Thus, Musa’s fate is determined by her lineage, the ignorance of which possibly created her and the villagers’s scorn, due to a lack of identity.

Likewise, Ouida had attracted harsh criticism for her attacks towards England, her implicit love for France and her decision to leave London for Italy. In a letter to her friend Lady Constance Ouida writes: “The whole fond of my mind is French which is why I must ever remain opposed to much in the English temperament”. (Bigland, 1950: 184). So, like Musa, Ouida did not have a clear identity and identified more with the French and Italians in her writings and her lifestyle. Charles Dudley Warner, an American nineteenth century writer claimed that Ouida “matches the vulgarity of America with the vulgarity of England; her fiercest condemnation falls on her own countrymen, however, because she assumes that they know better. She finds her consolation in the last home and refuge of poetry in this century, — Italy” (Warner, 1897: 10887)<sup>100</sup>. Indeed, in her book *Views and Opinions* Ouida says: “The late Duke of Albany (1853-1884) had a very intelligent and tender love of books, and had he lived, it is probable that his influence might have induced English society to care more for literature”, while speaking of fiction as a form of art she claims: “In France this is perfectly well known, and in Germany and in Italy, and even in Spain; but in England the idea that fiction is an art, and a very fine art, has been entirely stifled and obliterated under the deluge of trash, shot like rubbish from a dirt cart, which they dare to call literature” (Ouida, 1895: 165, 160). Ouida was very dissatisfied with her publishers, the circulating libraries and British copyright laws throughout her career which probably drove her away from England and London in particular.

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<sup>100</sup> In a letter written to Lady Wolseley, less than a year before Ouida died in 1908, the author still considers the English public of the day the coarsest and ugliest of all Europe. See ‘The Wolseley Papers’ held in the Hove Central Library, Brighton and Hove, UK. Available Online, letter 42, p. 124: [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/online/GB0510%20WOLSELEY\\_1.pdf](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/online/GB0510%20WOLSELEY_1.pdf)

However, Ouida seemed to have disliked London not only as the centre of the literary scene in England but also as a city *per se*. In 1888 Ouida contributed an article for Oscar Wilde's magazine, 'The Woman's World', on *The Streets of London* in which she claimed:

'London is the worst-lighted capital in the whole of Europe'; its 'streets are dreary'; almost every London house has 'the aspect of a menagerie combined with a madhouse' with awful basements, 'subterranean places in which nothing but the soul of a blackbeetle can possibly delight'; they are smelly with the 'odours of cooking and eating'. 'There is too much eating in all London houses; -she complains-, too many servants sleep in them; the air is not admitted freely enough;' because of the fear of burglars. What a difference with the great capitals of the Continent: Paris and Rome! (Severi, 2009: 132)

Like her character Musa, Ouida was an aesthete and appraised the beauty of her surroundings and nature. This, amongst other reasons, led Ouida to relocate to Italy just as Musa's excursions outside Maremma led her there after Joconda's death. After an interview with Ouida, Edmund Yates writes in 1877 that the author "loves open air, and considers the infinite charm of the Italian climate to be the number of hours which it enables you to pass out of doors, except for dinner and to sleep" (Yates, 1877: 242). Respectively, when Musa is invited by Sanctis to move with him to Paris, she replies referring to cities in general: "'I would never go where roofs lie close together,' she said; 'how can the people bear it? always breathing others breath instead of the honey-smell of the flowers'" (Ouida, 1882: 84, Vol. II). Yates also writes that the author "might take as her motto: *Nunquam minus sola quam cum sola*" (245)<sup>101</sup>. Indeed, like Musa, Ouida cherished her solitude and often considered English society monotonous and colourless.

When in 1871 Ouida moved to Italy, one could assume from the financial success of her works in the 70s and 80s that her life in the Mediterranean country somewhat contributed to

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<sup>101</sup> Never less alone than when alone.

her creativity<sup>102</sup>. Churchill also considers the author: “The most significant English novelist to write on Italy in the 1870s was Ouida. After a sporadic use of purely conventional Italian scenery in a very minor way in some of her earlier novels (*Chandos* 1866; *Idalia* 1867; and *Puck* 1870), she fell in love with the country in her visit there in 1871, settles in Florence, and thereafter looked constantly to Italy for her literary material” (Churchill, 1980: 162). Along similar lines, critics Alessandro Vescovi, Luisa Villa and Paul Vita in *The Victorians and Italy: Literature, Travel, Politics and Art* argue that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's self-assertion, like Ouida's, led her to declare Italy to be her permanent residence. Marianna Camus (1949- ), a literary critic who analysed Barrett Browning's letters, shows “the intensity of the poet's response to Italy and the exhilarating feeling of enfranchisement that she experienced, very different from Victorian straight-laced conventions. She was also affected at a creative level, and her time in the country helped her establish her own politicized stance as a poet” (Vescovi, 2009: 12). Italian landscapes captivated the English authoress who devoted her attention to the meticulous accounts of rustic Italy. Ouida was willing to set back by six months the publication of *In Maremma* (1882), in order to “verify the scenery [...] by visiting those places again previous to printing (Ouida, Letter to Chatto & Windus c. mid. Dec. 1880)” (66)<sup>103</sup>. Ouida's profound appreciation of nature and the countryside in conjunction with art is manifest in most of her works after the 1870's, especially in the case of *In Maremma* and *Signa*.

Yet, while Ouida and Musa abandon their hometowns for a more isolated way of life in the countryside, they could not escape the limitations set upon their art and daily life due to their

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<sup>102</sup> See M.J Nieman's Master's dissertation *Recasting a Victorian Woman Writer: Chatto and Windus' Letters to Ouida* (1994) held at The University of Reading.

<sup>103</sup> This letter is quoted in Jane Jordan's chapter “The Peasant and the Picturesque in Ouida's Italy” in Alessandro Vescovi, Luisa Villa and Paul Vita's *The Victorians and Italy: Literature, Travel, Politics and Art*, eds., Milan: Polimetrica S.A.S, 2009: 61-79.

gender. In *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1900* critic Deborah Cherry argues that:

In the earlier decades of the century the decision to become an artist had been largely driven by family and pressure and/or financial necessity. [...] These pathways remained in place throughout the century [...] For women the making of an author name was entangled in and disrupted by sexual asymmetry. Its form and circulation often registered sexual difference. Those who married had to negotiate a change of family name and either re-establish their career with a second or sometimes third name or retain that by which they were already known. (Cherry, 2000: 10, 157).

Thus, even for the upper classes becoming a writer and establishing a career was not an easy endeavour for women. According to Linda Peterson in *Becoming a Woman of Letters* Mary Howitt, a Victorian historian and writer, viewed writing as a family business, as a practiced vocation pursued by father, mother, and children who were apparently endowed with literary skills (Peterson, 2009: 97). There was also another set of literary writers,—whom Margaret Oliphant labelled as “professional artist-classes”—those who did not write out of economic need, and this small circle emerged and “rose to prominence at mid-century, as authors carved out studies and workspaces in their homes” (97). Lynn Pykett, on the other hand, in *The Improper Feminine* argues that this circle was a male privilege, and she expands on the idea of ‘professional’ writers and categorises them. She writes about Braddon, Wood, Broughton and Ouida and other female popular authors:

[...] [they] were clearly ‘professional’ in the sense that they earned their living from producing fiction. As applied to these women writers, ‘professionalism’ was invariably a denigratory term. The (female) ‘professional’ wrote to order, according to set formulae, in order to satisfy markets. The (male) ‘artist’, on the other hand, exercised a vocation and wrote out of an inner (rather than pecuniary) need. However, because they were women, Braddon and others had paradoxically, also to be regarded as amateurs. They were women first, and writers second (Pykett, 201, 202).

So, in essence women writers were considered neither professionals nor amateurs because their true ‘professions’ were ladyhood, wifehood or motherhood. Ouida, however, had neither married nor come from a background of writers nor was she a writer due to luxury; her ‘professionalism’ as Pykett claims was indeed a means to earn a living and after the 80s she did, to a certain extent, try to satisfy markets and her publishers; she had to establish herself on her own and her decision to leave England most likely played a pivotal role in the reestablishment of her profession as a writer, since not only did her writing alter considerably and constructively, she was also viewed as an outsider, which made her popular internationally as well.

In 1895, in her book *Views and Opinions*, Ouida claims that “the atmosphere of Italy has been the greatest fertiliser of English poetic genius” (Ouida, 1895: 274). It is well known that Ouida openly considered herself a brilliant writer long before 1895, therefore she undoubtedly included herself in this circle of geniuses<sup>104</sup>. In agreement with the inspiration Ouida might have acquired from the Italian rural settings she admired, Musa’s artistic nature is also enhanced while in the surroundings she relishes:

Don Piero says you sing like all the angels. That is better than even to sail a boat, for it pleases those in heaven. ‘I sing for myself,’ said the child, ‘and it is on the sea that I sing the best. In the church my throat gets full of dust; there is no air, and I hate it’. (Ouida, 1882: 100, Vol. I)

Musa’s art is singing and she performs better while close to the sea since that is where she feels unrestrained. The fact that she sings for herself shows her content in living alone, which she eventually does, as well as her choice to interact with people whenever it is needed or desired—

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<sup>104</sup> In a letter written on the 17th of June 1879 Ouida writes to Chatto: “Dear Mr. Chatto, I return the Proofs. I think it should be the first article in the number of the magazine, because you have no author there of equal rank in Literature with myself.” See also various letters from Ouida in Eileen Bigland’s *Ouida, the Passionate Victorian*, London, New York: Jarrolds, 1950.

an eccentric trait of Ouida herself<sup>105</sup>. The satisfying solitude Ouida experienced in the rural locations of Italy is apparent through Musa's artistic self:

Musa had a great skill at rhythmical [sic] improvisations. Silent at other times, with a silence that was in strong contrast with the loquacity of those around her, she would at times, when the fit fell on her, recite in the *terza rima* or the more difficult *ottavo*, poems of her own on every theme which came before her eye: poems that the next hour she forgot as utterly as the nightingale forgets no doubt the trills that he sets rippling through the night under the myrtle and the bay leaves. It is not an uncommon gift; in country places where the dreary levelling parrot-learning of the towns has not touched and destroyed the natural original powers of the people, this trick of musical language, of words that burn, and paint their pictures with fire of passionate and just recital, still refreshes and adorns the life of the labourer of the cornlands and the fishing villages and the old grey farmhouses, set high on a ledge of Carrara or Sabine hills and the fragrant orange thickets, and the sombre calm woods of Sardinia or Apulia. Where the Italian has not been dulled, stiffened, corroded, debased by the levelling and impoverishing influences of modern civilisation, there is he always classic, eloquent, ardent, graceful in body and mind; there is he still half a Greek, and wholly a sylvan creature. Musa, with her old mandoline with its ivory keys across her knee, and her brown hand every now and then calling the sleeping music from its strings, had moments of inspiration like any pythoness of old, and at such times her eyes flashed, her lips grew eloquent, her colour came and went, her voice rose in cadence that stirred the sluggish sickly souls around her with joy and with terror. (156-158, Vol. I)

Ouida clearly delineates in this excerpt the spiritual corruption of urban environments and the restraints they can pose on imagination and charisma. Kenneth Geoffrey Churchill, a historical and literary critic writes that: "England seems to Ouida to be stultifying to the creative imagination" (Churchill, 1980: 162). Her antipathy of large cities is evident throughout *In Maremma* since Musa's singing, Este's sculpting and Sanctis's frescoes reach their zenith in proximity to nature or after a journey to the countryside.

Musa's unknown identity and lack of family renders it problematic for the girl to pursue her love for singing. If Musa resided in a large city or even descended from a financially or even socially distinguished family, her life might have been fairly different:

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<sup>105</sup> See Eileen Bigland's *Ouida, the Passionate Victorian*, London, New York: Jarrolds, 1950: 96, 204.

In another land, and under other circumstances, the world might have heard of her and have hearkened as eagerly to her as the people of Santa Tarsilla had listened to her singing. Had study and wise companionship been given to her she might have found utterance for all the thoughts and fancies, the dreams and the affections, that thronged on her amidst the woods and on the sea, but left her dumb and moved to a mute joy, keen almost to pain. (Ouida, 1882: 320-321, Vol. 1).

‘In another land’ Musa’s charisma might have flourished but her position in society and her reticence and ignorance of those she sings of incarcerates her. Her fate according to Joconda and the villagers is that of a Victorian girl—to become a wife and a mother:

‘Some fisher lad must take you in a year or two.’ ‘They will not take me,’ said the child, not understanding the sense that was meant [...] Joconda said no more; she would not disturb the innocence and ignorance of the child by saying what she herself had meant. ‘These thoughts come soon enough,’ she said to herself [...] ‘Don Piero says you sing like all the angels. That is better than even to sail a boat, for it pleases those in heaven [...] the sea may drown you some day.’ ‘It is a good death,’ said the child, carelessly [...] ‘There are such beautiful things to see down, down, deep down, in the sea,’ added the child. ‘What good is that to them? Dead men are blind,’ said Joconda wearily. ‘Whether you lie in the sand or the sea it matters nothing once you are dead, but it matters to those that are left. Child, do not talk of such things; death is no toy, and the sea is greedy always.’ ‘The sea is good,’ said the child jealously, as if some creature she loved were aspersed. ‘The sea is better than the land. You wish me a boy. It is a seagull that I wish I were; I would be if I could.’ ‘A seagull cannot sing.’ ‘I would sooner fly than sing. It is something that sings in my throat, not me [...]. (100-101, Vol. 1)

The fact that Musa wishes to be that which all the villagers address her as, a seagull, is rather ironic. It is obvious that Joconda is trying to keep her away from the sea by claiming that her talent in singing is more valuable than her skills in sailing. The sea, the boat, the vision of herself as a seagull, represents Musa’s potential independence from men. However, Ouida, through Joconda implies that the girl’s eagerness to fly, an urge for isolation, will turn her away from her talent to sing, from art. Ouida eulogises the artist and shows that art can both confine and elevate the artist’s life.



Comparably, Ouida's vocation as a writer was a 'labour' which she likewise enjoyed and did not undertake to evade a lurking patriarch, but merely for the sake of mental fulfilment. Being a writer in the nineteenth century was viewed as a profession and especially in the case of women, a profession, an art form, through which they could gain financial independency. As the mid-Victorian writer Harriet Martineau comments in her autobiography in 1877: "Authorship has never been with me a matter of choice. I have not done it for amusement, or for *money*, or for *fame*, or for any reason but because I could not help it", a statement Ouida would undoubtedly have concurred with (Martineau, 1877: 188). For art's sake, Ouida often rejected propositions that could be more profitable, a stance which gave art precedence over money. In a letter addressed to Chapman and Hall in 1877, the authoress writes:

Three years ago C and W. offered me a "bonus" of £100 in excess on each novel if I would turn over my agreement with you to them; I refused; preferring to remain with your Firm than to obtain the extra money. (Appendix, lt. 76)

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1880, discussing the publication of a novel, Ouida again writes:

If I did not love Art too well ever to sacrifice it for money I could easily have passed it off on you as the 3 vol. novel. But with me you may be sure that the artistic feeling always outweighs all others. (Appendix, lt. 11)

And, similarly, in 1885 she writes to Chatto and Windus:

I have never sacrificed art to gain; but of course the practiced question of where one publishes a work is a purely financial one. (Appendix, lt. 35)

Obviously with whom she would publish with was never 'purely' a financial issue since she declined Chatto and Windus's lucrative offer and chose to remain loyal to Chapman and Hall. Although Ouida was known to be quite a spendthrift it was by no means at the expense of art.

Ouida's use of mythology not only unveils certain traits of her characters but also of herself. In a letter to her friend Lady Constance, in which she discusses religion, her strong admiration of ancient Greece is disclosed:

I don't like any creeds and am a pure Greek and theist, a pantheist! I'm afraid you will not like me any more. But I feel bound in candour to tell you this [...] A friend of mine calls me the last Greek (Bigland, 1950: 184)

It seems here that Ouida identified ideologically with the ancient Greeks and her mentality that of the French. A crisis of faith due to scientific progress and Darwinian philosophy apparently agreed with Ouida's convictions and her fascination with nature, ancient Greece and polytheism intimates a paganistic ideology on her part, delineated in her novels and particularly in *In Maremma*. In her book *Views and Opinions*, Ouida wrote a chapter entitled 'The Failure of Christianity', in which she analyses her ideas and sentiments concerning religion beyond the realm of fiction:

The intellect of mankind is every year forsaking it more utterly, and the ever-increasing luxury which is possible with riches, and the ever-increasing materialism of all kinds of life into which mechanical labour enters, are forces which every year drive the multitudes farther and farther from its primitive tenets. In a small, and a poor, community, Christianity may be a creed possible in its practical realisation, and consistent in its simplicity of existence; but in the mad world of modern life, with its overwhelming wealth and its overwhelming poverty, with its horrible satiety and its horrible hunger, with its fiendish greed and its ghastly crimes, its endless lusts and its cruel bitterness of hatreds, Christianity can only be one of two things — either a nullity, as it is now in all national life, or a dynamic force allied with and ruling through socialism, and destroying all civilisation as it, at present, stands. (Ouida, 1896: 129-130)

The discontent Ouida expresses here justifies her portrayals of natural and rustic scenery accompanied by mythological allusions as well as, again, the vulgarity of wealth and materialism. David Hume had argued that myths and religion arose "from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears, which actuate the human mind"

(Hume, 1767: 422). Similarly, Ouida's images of mythology and paganism sprang from her fascination with these hopes and fears and her need to express her own personal desires and anxieties as an artist and a woman.

Although Ouida altered her plot, as Chatto and Windus cordially requested, through the incorporation of mythological figures and images of the artist, she nonetheless managed to delineate certain social concerns. Her depictions can be viewed as a rather unwonted and fragmented portrayal of herself and the woman artist in the late Victorian period; while, her anachronistic use of mythological references render the plot all the more eccentric and unorthodox. Historian Bonnie Smith in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, referring to Victorian women writers claims that “despite the fact that many of the early women writers were aristocratic and educated, the acts of writing and earning money or fame from publishing were considered violations of feminine good manners and morality” (Smith, 2008: 121). Hence, to a certain extent, Ouida's work as a female artist was deemed unethical, and subsequently her self-representation and inflammatory opinions, discernible in them, impaired her reputation. The pretext of the immoral act female authors were committing with their writings can be explained accurately by critic Linda Peterson in *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market*: “Nineteenth-century fictional accounts of the woman artist were better as literary productions but discouraging as models, whether hagiographic or scandalous” (Peterson, 2009: 133). Therefore, since Ouida advocated, through her narratives, the fictional woman artist and, through her lifestyle and ideologies, the real-life female artist, her novels and perspectives were inevitably ‘christened’ scandalous.

## Conclusion

In this thesis I have addressed Ouida's oftentimes provoking and challenging responses to social and gendered standards which shaped the literary culture in which she wrote. I examine firstly her correspondence with her publishers and agent in order to establish that the characterisation labels attributed to her concerning her relationship with them have been exaggerated. While her lifestyle might have been eccentric—possibly injuring her reputation as a whole—I have attempted to show that in her professional dealings she was merely cautious and often but justly suspicious of others's wrongdoings. The letters examined give us insight into the reception of her works, her social concerns and the major influence her publishers and reviewers had upon her writing, which was every so often molded by them.

*Strathmore* exemplifies her preoccupation with society, its mores and its laws very early in her career as a novelist. While, a few years later, Ouida abandons her society novels, her depictions of high life and writes *Folle-Farine*, an amalgam of portrayals of upper and lower classes, stressing on the latter and the female victim of cruel patriarchal surroundings. Ouida's diverse writings were an incentive for Burnand to write a parody, which satirises Ouida's flamboyant settings and conceited characters as well as her innocent female characters. However, as shown, Burnand's humorous writing came into agreement with Ouida's standpoints rather than mocking them, adding an alleviated note to her novels—temporarily at least.

Having a distinguished reputation following her by the end of the 1870's, Ouida wrote her most outspoken novel: *Moths*. Depicting an outsider in an upper class circle, a girl who has to tolerate the hypocrisy of her environment, Ouida drafted, as this thesis has argued, her most

stirring “political satirical” sketch by allowing her protagonist to divorce and remarry (Nieman, 1992: 21). The novel caused a public reaction which pressured Ouida into returning to former plots thus, by revising and applying a lighter tone to that of *Folle-Farine* Ouida wrote *In Maremma*, one of her last successful novels. This thesis has discussed that the writer’s social ideologies are well hidden in this text and nicely veiled by enchanting mythological figures and artistic concerns in an endeavour to produce a work of fiction morally and socially acceptable.

Ouida’s novels, nevertheless, were always “concealed under the mattress, and it had not been so long ago since legs of a piano were described as limbs. Lines of conduct then considered ‘not quite nice’ seem at this day obsolete and old fashioned (Marbury, 1926: 8). Although moral impropriety characterised Ouida’s works in none of them do her female protagonists commit adultery—and this is the case with most of Ouida’s novels—which bring us back to the conservatism in sketching her main female characters which merely function as an emphasis on the vulgarity of the upper classes and the exploitation of the lower. It is intriguing that the two fallen women Folle-Farine and Musa die, Marion is ostracised and Vere, the only character who refuses to defy any unwritten moral rules, is happily remarried, facts which again demonstrate Ouida’s fusing of conventional and unconventional narratives. In particular, this thesis has argued that *Moths*, which is Ouida’s most straightforward social commentary and *Folle-Farine* which is Ouida’s most pessimistic work, exemplify the writer’s extremities in fiction. And Burnand’s parody seems to balance that which was considered extravagant in her writing; he demythologises Ouida without shocking the reader. Ouida’s article ‘To the Editor of The Times’ entitled “Moths” a few months after the novel was published corroborates that the author did not consider her depictions of high society exaggerated and this excerpt to a certain degree discloses why Ouida was neglected after the 1950s:

As regards the prodigality of the modes of living that I have described, I cannot admit that there is the slightest exaggeration of my own here. I have, indeed, described nothing that I have not seen [...] Society now-a-days is in itself madly extravagant and very strangely composed; any truthful picture of it looks of necessity overdrawn. Its passion for display, for excitement, for notoriety, is one of the saddest maladies of our times. English novelists do, it is true, still continue to depict mankind as always seated in Aunt Tabatha's tea-table, the current of small-talk only being allowed variety from the visit of an occasional murder or detective; but English novelists are not conspicuous for their knowledge of the world, and their ignorance does not change the fact that no generation was ever more sadly burdened than our own with licence, with satiety, and with passionless immorality which has not even the excuse of ardour. A *luxe* [? An illegible word in French] is the note of the time, and it is a contagious disease which spreads downwards from the palace to the cottage. This I have reflected and portrayed in 'Moths'; the exaggeration is not mine, but the epoch's. (Ouida, 1880: 5, col. F)

This excerpt encompasses and summarises that which is the aim of this thesis; to depict Ouida's reception and views. If her publishers and the marketplace had permitted it, Ouida would probably have written more '*Moths*', social satires and dark, unrequited love stories; but the fact that "in many ways she was ahead of her time", endowed with a "European spirit" that did not cease to shock, rendered her a seriously neglected Victorian female writer after the second half of the twentieth century and still a non-canonical one in our time, underresearched and to a certain degree uncharted (*The Novel to 1900*, 1980: 234).

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## Appendix:

### Transcriptions of Ouida's Correspondence in The Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations<sup>106</sup>

#### Correspondence to Chatto and Windus

##### Folder: 1877

1. A.L.<sup>107</sup>, signed with pseud. Ouida, to [Andrew] Chatto. [n.p., 1841?] 21.

Dear Mr. Chatto,

Will you please send me the book collection of Pan Pipes and Macmillan's new edition of Grimm's fairy tales (the large edition of 250 copies) and your own three volume of Lane's Arabian Nights<sup>108</sup>.

##### **2. Dec 19 1877**

Dear Mr. Chatto,

I see in the new Whitehall<sup>109</sup> there is an article on me. They are brought in new attacks on the World, so I should be much obliged if you will kindly see Mr Yates<sup>110</sup> as soon as you can and

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<sup>106</sup> The folders are categorised in the collection according to the dates of the letters.

<sup>107</sup> A.L. is an abbreviation used by the New York Library for 'Autograph Letter'.

<sup>108</sup> This letter was not written in 1841 as noted. All of the books mentioned were published in 1882 (*Grimm's Fairy Tales*) and 1883 (*Pan Pipes*). Edward William Lane (1801–1876) was a British orientalist and engraver who translated the Arabic classic, *One Thousand and One Nights* and published it with Chatto & Windus from 1839 to 1841 (3 vols.). Ouida however is probably referring to a new edition published in 1883. Jason Thompson. "Lane, Edward William (1801–1876)". In the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15990>.

<sup>109</sup> *Whitehall Review* (1876-1912) was "a 'personal' journal with a special feature in the publication of portraits, principally of ladies well known in the London world". Meynell, Wilfrid. *Journals and Journalism: With a Guide for Literary Beginners*. Field & Tuer, 1880, p. 140.

give him the information which he is too manly a man not to notice in the spirit in which it is offered. I have written to editor Whitehall to express my annoyance. With compliment yours.

## **1878**

### **3. Feb.5 1878**

I will change the title with pleasure I do not like it much myself. The M.S. should always arrive with my advice thereof and I begged Mr. Spottiswoode<sup>111</sup> instantly to sent word to me if by any misadventure it did not do so. I write this in haste to acknowledge receipt of the £100 cheque for 1sy Feb. and to say I draw today for the second £100 not being able to alter my arrangements at this moment. I will answer you fully as to your wishes in this respect next week. I shall at all times be willing to consult your convenience where it is feasible for me to do so. With thanks for the two pretty copies of Ariadne<sup>112</sup> and the May? Believe me yours sincerely Ouida.

### **4. June 3 1878**

Dear Mr. Chatto

Pray send the new book in large advertisement to Whitehall, Truth<sup>113</sup> and World and send to Mr. Lippi, Mr. Yates and Mr. Labouchere<sup>114</sup> Personally copies with my compliments. The cheque for the 1<sup>st</sup> has not reached me yet. Believe me sincerely yours Ouida.

### **5. August 11 1878**

Dear Mr . Chatto

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<sup>110</sup> Edmund Hogdson Yates was a Scottish journalist and novelist. He founded the *World* along with another journalist, Grenville Murray (1824–1881). P. D. Edwards. “Yates, Edmund Hodgson (1831–1894)”. In the *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30188>.

<sup>111</sup> Spottiswoode and Co. were London based printers.

<sup>112</sup> Published in 1877 by Chapman & Hall and Chatto & Windus

<sup>113</sup> “*Truth* had much in common with the *World*, devoting a large space to the political, personal, and cynical paragraphs of which everybody more or less protests that he disapproves, while everybody reads them. *Truth* is less literary than the *World*, caring less for classical finish or technical excellence than for spiciness and dash.” Meynell, 1880, p.139.

<sup>114</sup> Henry Du Pré Labouchere established the journal *Truth* in 1876. Sidebotham, Herbert “Labouchere, Henry Du Pré (1831–1912)”. rev. H. C. G. Matthew. In *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, Oct 2009. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34367>



If you write to Mrs. L. Lynton<sup>115</sup> will you tell her that I only just recently heard of her illness in Florence. I should be sorry for her to deem me so heartless as not to have seen something of her had I known her suffering so near to me.

I regret if you find *Friendship*<sup>116</sup> not so off well; it will sell largely in the six shilling form. But you seem to me to have kept it rather too dark, and it was never sufficiently advertised. As for the Press, remember all my reputation has been made in the teeth? Of the snarling jealousees and columnees of the newspaper tribe of “small talents”. This splendid air has done me great good, I am many about and expect to be at home about the middle of September. In haste ever sincerely yours Ouida. If you want to write to me address post Restante Innsbeuek Austria.

## 6. August 24 1878

Dear Mr. Chatto

Thank you for your letters and enclosures. I wish I had known Mr. Lynton had been at Jenbach as I have been twice through there; it leads to one of the loveliest of Austrian lakes. I go to Venice next week and hope to be home by the middle of the next month. The cool mountain air has done me much good. There has been a “Cabal?”<sup>117</sup> against “*Friendship*” in the English Press; with Yates it was I am sure vindictiveness because I did not write the serial for him. The letters I get from the public t? with admiration of it. I will not what you say about the 7 day ?; I have already left the draft for 1<sup>st</sup> September with Fenzi<sup>118</sup> so please leave orders about it if you go out of Town. I will write soon again. Most sincerely Ouida.

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<sup>115</sup> Linton, Elizabeth [Eliza] Lynn (1822–1898) was an author and journalist.

Anderson, Nancy Fix. “Linton, Elizabeth Lynn (1822–1898)”. In *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16742>

She signed her surname with and ‘i’ but several Victorian newspapers and journals wrote her surname with a ‘y’ as in Ouida’s case here.

<sup>116</sup> Published in 1881 by Chatto and Windus.

<sup>117</sup> I believe Ouida is referring to Yates’s partner Grenville Murray, since their journal, *World*, attacked Ouida’s novel *Friendship*. In 1875 Grenville wrote a novel with the title “The Boudoir Cabal”, hence her use (a caustic one) of the word cabal in quotations.

<sup>118</sup> Sebastiano Fenzi, the son of a wealthy Florentine *banker* was a “renowned gymnast, a charming poet, and a sound politico economist” who married an English woman and founded in 1851 the *Rivista Britannica*, a magazine devoted to articles on English subjects. See William, Beatty-Kingston’s *Monarchs I Have Met*, Harper & Bros., 1888, p.187 and *English Miscellany: A Symposium of History, Literature and the Arts* 13 (1962): 214. Published for the British Council by Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura. Fenzi was Ouida’s banker until 1889 (see letter 50)

## 7. [1878 ?]

Gentlemen

Your letter to Mr Rose has been forwarded to me and as I thereby perceive that you are ignorant of all that I have complained of during the last six months. I deem it only due to you to address you personally myself previous to taking any further slips by the medium of Law. With regard to the United States the matter stands thus: That my sales there, and the prices of my Advance sheets are alike deteriorated and damaged by your repartition of any works there. Hefty sets of each work has been sent by you to the recent Fall Trade Sale, and there sold at nominal prices, not to mention large sales in other ways and importations through Canada. All American rights being mine this is a grave invasion of them, and productive of most serious and illegitimate damage to my interests present and future. But this is not the only question: You must be well aware that when in 74 I refused your advantageous offer solely from a sense of loyalty to Chapman and Hall and unwillingness to leave an old and friendly firm for a new and untried, I would never have foreseen that you would possess yourselves (against my known wishes) of works placed only for a few years in the hands of C and H. I was therefore deeply annoyed, as well as annoyed when I saw *Wooden Shoes*, *Signa* and *Winter City* placed in your cheap editions. Though Mr Chapman stated you were only acting as his agents and I only learned subsequently you had purchased them. Thus I neither enjoy the pecuniary advantages I might have obtained from you nor retained.<sup>119</sup>

## 8. June 17, 1879

Dear Mr. Chatto,

I return the Proofs. I think it should be the first article in the number of the magazine, because you have no author there of equal rank in Literature with myself. It would illustrate well. Would you like an article occasionally/signed/ for the *Gentleman's*<sup>120</sup> on serious topics? The price? Thanks for June cheque duly received. In haste sincerely yours Ouida.

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<sup>119</sup> In this letter Ouida is protesting about the issue of a cheap edition of *Ariadne* (1877) before the expiration of one year from the date of its first issue.

<sup>120</sup> The long-established *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731-1922) was published by Chatto and Windus, the first bound volume to bear the company's name being issued in 1877. See Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor's, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, Academia Press, 2009, p.109.

**9. October 28, [1879]**

I send you this day the conclusion of “Moths”. I cannot conceive why you print so slowly. I have much still to receive. You will make the vols and as seems best to you; perhaps you will find it needful to put more matter in each page. Please to acknowledge receipt of the M.S. Such follows that sent from here on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

**10. November 30<sup>th</sup> 1879**

Dear Mr Chatto,

Thanks for your letters; The last piece of Moths went to Spotiswoode last day of October and I would have had it earlier by far had they not so dwelled with the earlier M.S. However I think it just and well it has been delayed and the “Whitehall” is giving it a great réélame I did not mean any slight to the works you publish, but such writers as Mr. Payn<sup>121</sup>, [?] gibbish, in the pleasant magazine writers have no claim to those sort of [?] celebrity which I have won. You will see an interview with me in Whitehall of next week. Mrs Lynn Linton’s book is so well and strongly written that it is a pity so much poisee has been wasted on such an impossible volume, say impossible because no such clergyman could have gone on in such a manner in an English country without “inhibition” and his Bishop’s interference<sup>122</sup>. I will write soon again. Meanwhile I am sincerely yours Ouida.

**1876-1898****11. Sep 2 1880**

Dear Mr. Chatto

Please do tell me if Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> will be convenient for you to send me the £250 due for the cheap edition of “Moths” which was published in compliance with your regrets earlier than the time

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<sup>121</sup> James Payn (1830–1898) was a novelist and journal editor. See Damian Atkinson’s “Payn, James (1830–1898)” In *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition Oct. 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21640>

<sup>122</sup> Ouida is probably referring to *Under Which Lord?* (1879) in which “a wife is torn between the conflicting demands of an agnostic husband and a persuasive priest”. See John Sutherland’s *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction*, Stanford University Press, 1990, p.378.

agreed on; it is ever deeply to be lamented that you so hastily broke up the type of “Moths”. A great author wrote me the other day: It is a great pity [?] C and W attended to those idiotic newspapers and were so timid with a book which was one of the greatest successes in society that has ever been seen; when they broke up the type people would have given 3 guineas for the old copy”. I am sorry Mr. Payn is your literary advisor<sup>123</sup>; I trust you never speak with him of my works for so commonplace a writer as he is can be no judge of such works as mine. A man who like him can see no genius in Sir Walter Scott can be no fit judge of any genius. Now to business: tell me when will it be convenient to you to pay the £250 for the cheap edition of “Moths”? The 1 vol. new story is written and I forward half of it this day; but it is not possible for the £350 to include the copying too. It is 800 M.S. pages and all your payments are made to me at the rate of a £1 a M.S. page and more. If I did not love Art too well ever to sacrifice it for money I could easily have passed it off on you as the 3 vol. novel. But with me you may be sure that the artistic feeling always outweighs all others; with writers like Mr. Payn you would not find this. Please send me cheque for Findelkind<sup>124</sup> and acknowledge M.S. by return. Believe me sincerely yours Ouida.

## 12. 1880?

Dear Mr Chatto

Pray rectify the absurdity of having the gestations from “Moths” in two different parts of the Volume. I twice directed attention to this unnecessary when returning the proofs and I never supposed the book would be published otherwise than in correct alphabetical order. I fear Spottiswoode is very careless. I cannot conceive how an Index could be made up without the misarrangements being discovered. I have not examined the book when I wrote. Believe me Sincerely yours Ouida.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> In his reply to this letter on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September Chatto writes: “Your informant is mistaken in supposing that Mr. Payn is our literary adviser. It is Messrs Smith & Elder to whom he fills that position” in M.J. Nieman’s *Recasting a Victorian Woman Writer: Chatto and Windus’ Letters to Ouida*. Master’s Dissertation. The University of Reading, 1994, p.23.

<sup>124</sup> Published in 1880 by Chatto&Windus.

<sup>125</sup> In an announcement of *Moths* as a new novel before it was published Ouida cut the advertisement of her novel and commented right next to it, repeating similar words in her next letter to Chatto: “I do not like being advertised after injurious novelists, that being one Charles Gibon author of *Robin Gray* and *Queen of the Meadow*”. Other

**13. 1880?**

Dear Mr. Chatto

I enclose declaration for "Moths". I very much object to it being advertised after the names of injurious writers as I see it every where. I regret that we discussed the title so soon. It has been printed so slowly that Spottiswoode has always been in arrivals some 200 or 300 pages of copy as they are now; they send me at the rate of a sheet a week. I enclose copy of your letter of last year which you will see it too impossible for me to think that you expected the M.S. in July. I received cheque for 1<sup>st</sup> October this day and will write on those matters in a few days. Sincerely yours Ouida.

P.S. I have not yet had proofs of copy of Moths that I sent middle of Sept.

**14. 1880?**

Dear Mr. Chatto,

You have omitted to send me the monthly cheque for 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. I hear from Lippi that Moths will not be out until the end of the month. It is 3 months since Spottiswoode had the last chapter to print in type. I hope you will never place another book in the hands of these dilatory and inattentive printers. You will kindly let Leighton bind the presentation copies as usual and post them to me 4 here 1 of [?] to Mr. Borthwick<sup>126</sup> Saton Place and one to Mrs. Drane<sup>127</sup> Morny Lodge Torgevy Torquay [?] It costs less to post them here with wadding round them than the train which at grande vetesse [?] takes 6 weeks to arrive. Believe me sincerely yours Ouida.

**15. 1880?**

Dear Mr Chatto

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writers are Lynn Linton, whom Ouida openly admired, and James Payn whom she palpably execrated. The spiteful comment was most likely directed towards Payn.

<sup>126</sup> Algernon Borthwick, Baron Glenesk (1830–1908) was the editor and later proprietor of the newspaper *Morning Post*. H. C. G. Matthew. "Borthwick, Algernon, Baron Glenesk (1830–1908)". In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31973>  
Borthwick often attended Ouida's parties at the Langham Hotel. See Elizabeth Lee's *Ouida: A Memoir*. T. F. Unwin, 1914, p.43.

<sup>127</sup> Mrs. Drane was an old and intimate friend. See Monica Stirling's *The Fine and the Wicked: The Life and Times of Ouida*. Coward-McCann, 1958, p.37.

In addition the Pink Review<sup>128</sup> has appropriated Birds in the Snow<sup>129</sup>. Let me know at once what your lawyer thinks. If the Law do not aid I shall appeal to the King as these [?] are royal printer. I am grieved beyond measure that you did not tell me about Mudie before breaking up the types of Moths which has lost to me some increase of editions and you some extra gain in money. I would have had Mudie called to account by my friends. The [?] would no more allow him to withdraw a book of mine than they would a novel of Lord Beaconsfield's<sup>130</sup>. That is all his pompous silly way of trying to pass as a Writer to the public. The Saturday Review has always slanged me; when Amelia Edwards<sup>131</sup> reviews in the Saturday Review and William Black<sup>132</sup> in Daily News and a host of triumph novelists in other journals it is quite natural that they should abuse me when they know no English writer and only a few French can commence or command tither my fare as my attraction for the world, and I may say without exaggeration the universality of my European reputation. Read "Improbability" in the Whitehall of June 5<sup>th</sup>. The worse of English newspaper writers is their extreme ignorance coupled with their love of mediocrity. [...]

## **1881**

**16. Nov. 14 1881**

Dear Mr Chatto

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<sup>128</sup> Ouida might be referring to the London based newspaper *Globe*. It was "well known from its evening *pink sheet*". Read, Robert (of Leicester). *Modern Leicester: Jottings of Personal Experience and Research*. Oxford University, 1881, p. 232. Meynell also writes that "For the first sixty years of its issue the *Globe* was a Liberal paper, and its change to the other political side caused as much comment as the recent and contrary transition of the *Pall Mall*. Once upon a time a past editor of the *Globe* had a furious controversy with D'Israeli the younger: but the Lord Beaconsfield of to-day has few more able and sincere admirers than the editor and staff of the pink sheet". Meynell, Wilfrid. *Journals and Journalism: With a Guide for Literary Beginners*. Field & Tuer, 1880, p. 123. Meynell refers to the *Globe* as "the pink sheet"; thus the use of the word 'pink' in association with the newspaper might have been common practice amongst writers and critics at the time.

<sup>129</sup> A short story published in 1880 in the book *Pipistrello and Other Stories*.

<sup>130</sup> Lord Beaconsfield was Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804–1881), prime minister and novelist. Parry, Jonathan. "Disraeli, Benjamin, earl of Beaconsfield (1804–1881)". In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, May 2011. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7689>

<sup>131</sup> Edwards, Amelia Ann Blanford (1831–1892), author and Egyptologist. Manley, Deborah. "Edwards, Amelia Ann Blanford (1831–1892)". In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8529>

<sup>132</sup> Black, William (1841–1898) was a journalist and novelist. Garnett, Richard. "Black, William (1841–1898)". Rev. S. R. J. Baudry. In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2499>

I must regret that a Village Commune<sup>133</sup> be not announced as a “new novel”. It is contrary to my stipulations and most injurious to the work. I hear from many English of distinction and literary men travelling here of the enormous sale you have had of “Moths” and all say that it was very unjust to me to break up the type, or having breaking it up not have announced that every copy was sold and have set it up again. The early production of it at 5s is an alteration of our agreed for which I receive no corresponding profit. I am astonished too to see Friendship in the 2s edition and if I had imagined that you would put any work in so soon I would have retained the copyright. When I had the pleasure of talking with you I never hinted any such intention; I do most strongly object to new works being thus cheapened. I shall be obliged if you will prevent [?] It from advertising my name in connection with his unauthorised version of Held in Bondage<sup>134</sup> as “Dalilah”<sup>135</sup>. He has no right to use my name for his announcement. I should think an injury [?] would lie.

## **1882**

### **24. Feb. 4 1882**

[...] The book In Maremma<sup>136</sup> can be divided as you desire But the title I do not wish to change. You may be satisfied that the public reads whatever I write and the name of title consequence. “Will you post me the book you are about to publish on Hair”<sup>137</sup>; and would you also send me Winsor and Newton’s handbook “Paintings on Linen and Glass.”<sup>138</sup> Sincerely yours Ouida.

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<sup>133</sup> Published in 1881.

<sup>134</sup> This is Ouida’s first novel entitled *Granville de Vigne*, published serially from 1861-63 in the *New Monthly Magazine* and was renamed *Held in Bondage* in 1863 when published by the Tinsley Brothers.

<sup>135</sup> *Held in Bondage* was dramatised in 1880 by James Willing, a pen name for John Thomas Douglass. See Jackson, Allan Stuart. *The Standard Theatre of Victorian England*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1993, p. 346-349.

<sup>136</sup> Published in 1882 by Chatto and Windus.

<sup>137</sup> “The Hair; its Treatment in Health, Weakness, and Disease. By Dr. J. Pincus, of Berlin. London: Chatto and Windus, 1882. —This cheap but well got-up little work of seventy pages, by one who is well known for his painstaking labours on diseases of the hair, is evidently addressed mainly to the public, and contains a clear popular outline of the anatomy and physiology of the hair, followed by directions for its management, and by some account of diseased states and their treatment”. From the medical journal *The Lancet* (1823-current day), volume 1882.

<sup>138</sup> *Transparency Paintings on Linen and Ditto in Glass* where one-shilling handbooks written by “Winsor and Newton, Manufacturing Artists’ Colourmen, and Drawing-Paper Stationers, 38 Rathbone Place, London, W.”. From *The Publishers’ Circular and General Record of British and Foreign Literature* 25 (1891): 266 published by Sampson Low.

**25. 1882?**

Dear Mr Chatto

Why do you have Maremma out of all your advertisements? It has been too grand a success to be out of them so soon and I must ask again for you never to put mine with others in small type heading "New Novels". I conclude you see my letters in "Times"? In a few says I shall send you the M.S. for payments.

**26. 1882?**

Dear Sirs

Pray be so good as to advertise the Times after Maremma not the Academy and I do not like to see it placed after Mr. Payn's book in your lists. I am greatly concerned at the delay on the Prince's stories I can't understand it.

**27. 1882?**

Dear Mr Chatto

I must ask you once and forever not to do honour to such rubbish as the portions? I have interlined by quoting them after any works of mine. When a writer's name is famous all over the world as mine is I think all Press quotations are a mistake and duly needless. Such silly notices as most of these are almost grotesque when written of me who is as well known to the world as myself. I made a great celebrity in the truth trust of the whole English Press and very few of its members can honestly confess or pardon that now when it is a fact undeniable and universally known you would add to the sale of Bimbi<sup>139</sup> if you announced the Prince's name in connection with it.

**28. 1882?**

Dear Mr. Chatto

Thanks about the Langham. Also for the very elegant copies of Maremma. Will you please send one to Mrs Drane Morny Lodge Targuay. Please too to send a set of unbound sheets to

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<sup>139</sup> Published in 1882 by Chatto and Windus.



Hachette<sup>140</sup> at once; also the same to Sig Treves Editori Torino Italy<sup>141</sup>. If you could let the cheque for 1<sup>st</sup> April reach me on the 1<sup>st</sup> April it would be a convenience. I think the binding of Maremma beautiful. You cannot expect the book to be as popular as Moths but you wished for one dans le genre of Ariadne. Yours sincerely Ouida.

### **1883 (Folder 1)**

#### **29. January 1883**

[...]I hear Bimbi is the most successful child's book since Alice and Wonderland<sup>142</sup>.

#### **30. Letter from Marie Corelli to Ouida written January 5<sup>th</sup> 1883 in the third person.**

11 Hanover Place

Clarence Gate

London. W.

The Contessa Marie Corelli<sup>143</sup> presents her compliments and admiring regard to "Ouida", the great novelist, and earnestly seeks her permission to publish a selection of beautiful thoughts and passages, which after much patient and careful study aided by a sincere desire to do the genius of the author full justice, the Contessa Corelli has compiled from Ouida's works. Scarcely anyone can have read the novels and romances of "Ouida" with more admiration and interest than the Contessa Corelli, and it is because she is so desirous of showing her appreciation of Ouida's marvellous genius, that she now strongly desires to plead for permission to carry out her plan to the fullest extent. The Contessa Corelli will enter into any arrangements "Ouida" may like to propose- and will place the whole volume in her hands for her approval before publication-, but as an Italian, and one who highly appreciated the tender and beautiful things Ouida has said of

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<sup>140</sup> Hachette (Paris) was one of Ouida's non-British publishers. See Palmer, Beth and Adelene Buckland. *A Return to the Common Reader: Print Culture and the Novel, 1850-1900*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2011, p. 43.

<sup>141</sup> Signor Fratelli Treves was an Italian publisher. See *The Publishers' Circular and General Record of British and Foreign Literature* 54 (1891): 471 published by Sampson Low and Co.

<sup>142</sup> *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was written by Lewis Carroll, a pseudonym for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and was published in 1865 by Macmillan and Co.

<sup>143</sup> Marie Corelli (1855–1924) pseudonym for Mary Mackay was a novelist. When this letter was written Corelli had just moved to London which prodded the start of her career. Mullin, Katherine. "Mackay, Mary [Marie Corelli] (1855–1924)". In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, Jan 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34742>

her country, the Contessa Corelli earnestly hopes she may be given preference over any other compiled. The Contessa is special correspondent in London for the American and Continental Press, and is the author of several successful poems and romances. She entreats Ouida to pardon her apparent boldness, if she ventures to assert that there can be no one who would do the proposed volume so well- for there can be no one who would throw so much zeal and earnestness into what has been and what must be a labour of true love and sincere regard. The Contessa would remind Ouida how often she has described her love for Italy- will she therefore for the sake of that love, permit one Italian out of many to prove the high appreciation in which she is held all over the world.

### 31. January. 30. 1883

Dear Mr Chatto

We will have Wanda<sup>144</sup>. The “Wolf of the Slipper?” would be too sensational for me and besides he is not a Wolf, poor fellow! I should like you to read the proofs only when revised. I had not the letter you speak of but any selection you may think good I have no doubt will please me. I should like to have done it myself. There is a very good one in Holland. Remember “Bimbi” is but 8 months old yet; “Alice” is I think 20 years old; so by the time Bimbi reaches his majority you may have sold 40000 copies<sup>145</sup>. Say something polite from me to Ms Corelli. Believe me sincerely yours Ouida.

### 32. 7 [?] June 1883

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<sup>144</sup> Published in 1883 by Chatto and Windus. Along with this letter is a newspaper clipping from the *Athenaeum* dated May 22, 1883. It advertises *Wanda* and Ouida has noted on it: “I quietly object to this form”. She is listed second after Wilkie Collins’s *Heart and Science*. After her name follows that of Anthony Trollope, Alphonse Daudet, John Murray, and the Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle. She has also cut an advertisement of Margaret Oliphant’s *The Ladies Lindores* from *The World* dated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, 1883 on which she writes: “This is how a good writer should be advertised”. Oliphant’s book is advertised on its own, a privilege that Ouida believed she deserved and had gained.

<sup>145</sup> Published in 1882 by Chatto and Windus. Twenty years later the novel is reprinted only once in 1892, obviously not receiving the praise and publicity of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* as Ouida was hoping for.

[...] I regret Spottiswoode has no good Reader; there are so many [?] printers' errors such as the Scylla such as no author should have the trouble of correcting. In the last pages of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of In Maremma wondered is printed wandered.

### **33. 27 June 1883**

#### Midsummer day

Dear Mr Chatto a Mr Cobborn?<sup>146</sup> Wants to make a Birthday Book<sup>147</sup>. I do not like being associated with Protestant clergymen. Is it true that you told him you like him to do it? [...]

#### A.L., A.L.S., etc. to Chatto and Windus.

#### 1876-1898

#### 1883 (Folder 2)

### **34. 3 December 1883**

[...] I need not say there is not truth in that silly statement concerning Capel and myself. The English Press seems to have no other occupation than to invent untruths about me. With this letter Ouida has cut out from the James's Gazette page II a piece with the title Literary Notes stating: "It is stated that, as the result of a correspondence with Monsignor Capel, "Ouida" has become a convert of the Roman Catholic Church."<sup>148</sup>

### **35. 1883?**

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<sup>146</sup> I could not find any information about Mr. Cobborn.

<sup>147</sup> A Birthday Book was a collection of quotations. *Academy* 1510 (Apr. 13, 1901): 332.

<sup>148</sup> I could not find the nineteenth century St. James's Gazette. However, there was a rumour that Ouida intended to convert to Catholicism: "'Ouida' has announced her intention to embrace the Catholic faith. Her conversion is attributed to Mgs. Capel, with whom she has been in correspondence for some time". In *Good Literature: A Literary Eclectic Weekly* 5 (1883):275. American Book Exchange. Ouida replies to these statements in an article to the editor of *The Times*: "Sir, I am beset with inquiries from the public as to the truth of an absurd report which has been put in a circulation concerning myself and Monsignor Capel. Will you allow me to say, once and for all, in *The Times*, that there is not a word of truth in it? Monsignor Capel was present at a morning party that I gave in the spring, and lunched with me once or twice afterwards. That is all the communication I had with this most agreeable person. He never mentioned theology and I never heard him preach. Obediently yours, Ouida". Ouida. "A Theological Rumour" (Letters to the Editor). *The Times*. Thursday 6 December 1883. Issue 30996, col A, p. 7. Ouida did not wish to be associated with the clergy (see also letter 36).

[...] Prince Leopold has just written himself to me that he thinks Wanda the most beautiful of books and envies Lady Paget<sup>149</sup>.

## **1884**

### **36. 13 March 1884**

Dear Mr. Chatto

I am extremely surprised that you have sent half the amount due on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> and which you said on your letter of Jan. 25 should be forwarded in Feb. I must request you to forward a cheque for the remainder by return of post. I sent you M.S. on Friday last. The title of the work is Princess Napraxine<sup>150</sup>. Proofs are returned to Spottiswoode 10 March. I beg to remain yours truly Ouida.

## **1885**

### **37. October 6 1885**

Dear Mr. Chatto

I will not write the business letter for I went? from home and dismissed all business= memories. I was going to say that I will say now; --- that if you have any offer to make me for it I shall have a story of English Society ready in now about half the length of Othmar<sup>151</sup>. Now for such rights as you have over Othmar I can anywhere get from 30s to 40s anywhere per each M.S. page; and my M.S. pages always average the same. You must be aware that what are called serial rights are paid double and treble what you gave for Othmar. Of course in the old method of payment a public= caution less contented me; the one was convenient; the other agreeable. I have never sacrificed art to gain; but of course the practiced question of where one publishes a work is a purely financial one. I should much regret to publish elsewhere as we have always been good

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<sup>149</sup> Prince Leopold, the first duke of Albany (1853–1884) was the fourth and youngest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. J. M. Rigg. "Leopold, Prince, first duke of Albany (1853–1884)". Rev. K. D. Reynolds. In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, Oct. 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16475>

Lady Walpurga Ehrengarde Helena (von Hohenthal) Paget was the wife of the British Ambassador in Rome. See *The Victorians and Italy: Literature, Travel, Politics and Art*. Eds. Vescovi, Alessandro Luisa Villa and Paul Vita. Milan: Polimetria S.a.s., 2009, p. 61.

The Prince probably states that he envies Lady Paget because she was very close friends with Ouida.

<sup>150</sup> Published in 1884 by Chatto and Windus.

<sup>151</sup> Published in 1885 by Chatto and Windus.

friends and I hope you will propose such terms as I can consistently with practiced interests accept. If so, I would arrange for the shorter story , and a future longer one. But the terms must be good. I could not beg as much as your reams of the delicious Stairs Mill paper. Cant't they tell you any retail stationer whom they supply? R.S.V.P. as soon as possible sincerely yours Ouida despair

### **1889 (Folder 1)**

**38. January 30 1889**

Gentelmen,

You will allow me to observe that your reply is incorrect as to fact, and unsatisfactory as offering any adequate explanation or compensation for the great injury you do to this work. As I have had direct dealings with the firm of Tillotson<sup>152</sup> myself as you were aware you know that I should not have allowed you to have a work of mine to undersell it to a firm to which I could have sold it directly had I desired such a method of publication. It was wholly unfair in you to approach for such a purpose another firm with which I had dealings. You had no possible right to show the proofs to any person, or persons, without my authority. By so doing you diminish the status of a writer, and make known prematurely the matter and treatment of a work. When in London you and Mr. Tillotson both informed me that he would not publish the work because it insulted the working man and pressed [?] Salisbury<sup>153</sup>. Your own Radical and [?] Rule principles are too well known for you not to have exposed yourself to the charge of having wilfully and injuriously withheld from sale a work favourable to a Party to which you are adverse. The injury done to my own interests remains for after= deliberations. You perfectly understood, and firmly rejected, my offer to buy back the works from you in Jan. 1887; at that time you declared that Mr. Tillotson refused to publish it for the political reason above named. You asked £800 of Mr. Tillotson for the mere newspaper right though you considered £900 sufficient payment to me for all English rights. Mr. Tillotson himself told me that he considered £800 a proper sum for newspaper rights alone; and was ready to pay it; but objected to the Conservative and aristocratic opinions of the

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<sup>152</sup> William Frederic Tillotson (1844–1889) was a newspaper proprietor and a publisher.

<sup>153</sup> Lord Salisbury was a prime minister for 13 years non-consecutively. Smith, Paul. "Cecil, Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-, third marquess of Salisbury (1830–1903)". In *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, Jan 2011. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32339>

work. He also stated that he objected to take a work of mine through you, when he could deal with me direct.

Faithfully yours

Ouida

### **39. 18 Feb. 1889**

Gentlemen

I find many errors of the Press? in Guilderoy<sup>154</sup>. I will return you the Vols. This week and you will be so good as to have it revised by a careful reader. Freicher von Tauchnitz<sup>155</sup> called on me the other day and desires to issue the work on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. I wish also that it should be brought out at that date. Mr Mc Clure wrote that he has spoken to you about a new work of mine. He had no authority from me to do so to anyone. I should not in any event address you through a third person. I shall be obliged if you will send me unbound sheets of the three vol. edition of "Othmar" and "Princess Napraxine" I remain faithfully yours Ouida.

### **40. 5 march 1889**

Gentlemen,

Thanks very much for the books. I gave my original copies to the Princess Beatrice. I forwarded proofs of Vol I. Guilderoy and will send the other Vols this week. Mr. Mc Clure<sup>156</sup> left with me a written offer of £1000 for serial rights of my new novel, and of a short story; his is extremely anxious that I should give them to him at this price; all book rights and other rights remaining mine. If you will give me £1000 also for the book rights of the the 3 Vol. novella and the little story I will agree to give you them; retaining only the Tauchnitz and Hachette rights in my own rights. I can give you the entire M.S. of the novel in May and perhaps earlier. I remain faithfully yours Ouida. P.S. Mr. Mc Clure agrees that the publication shall be made serially without delay.

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<sup>154</sup> Published in 1889 by Chatto and Windus.

<sup>155</sup> Ouida has misspelt Tauchnitz's name. Christian Bernhard, *Freiherr von Tauchnitz* (1816-1895) was the founder of the existing firm of Bernhard Tauchnitz. His printing and publishing firm was established at Leipzig in 1837. From *The Encyclopædia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature & General information*. Vols 25-26. Eds. Chisholm, Hugh and James Louis Garvin. Edition 13. The Encyclopædia Britannica Company, Ltd., 1926, p. 425.

<sup>156</sup> Samuel Sidney McClure (1857-1849) was an American editor and publisher. Barkan, Elliott Robert. *Making it in America: A Sourcebook on Eminent Ethnic Americans*. ABC-CLIO, 2001, p.229.

**41. 26 March 1889**

Gentlemen

I will accept the terms contained in your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> inst. (Instantly?) on condition that you will forward me by return a draft at 3 months (as 4 months) for £300. I will then send you the first chapters of the three vol novel. Did you see Mr Mc Clure his return from here? Believe me very faithfully yours Ouida. P.S. Please cross all drafts and cheques to me "Ou Fresne Freres". They are my bankers now instead of the Fenzi who embroiled my affairs and caused me losses. Thanks for Bimbi.

**1890****42. 12<sup>th</sup> June 1890**

Elmstead, Carlton Road, Putney, London, S.W.

Dear Madam,

I am engaged on a work for Messers Chatto and Windus dealing with the fiction of the century, and including brief biographical notices of prominent novelists. I shall be greatly obliged if you would kindly furnish me with such information as you may think proper to be used in connection with your name. The particulars chiefly desired are (1) name in full; (2) date and place of birth; (3) and if graduated at any university the name of the college, etc.; (4) profession, offices, and similar items; (5) such other points germane to your literary career as you may be please to communicate. Awaiting the favour of an early reply, I remain, dear Madame, yours faithfully, Mackenzie Bell.<sup>157</sup>

Madame Louise de la Ramee<sup>158</sup>

**1893****43. 10 Jan 1893**


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<sup>157</sup> Bell, *Henry Thomas Mackenzie* (1856-1930) was a poet and a critic, better known simply as *Mackenzie Bell*. *Men and Women of the Time: A Dictionary of Contemporaries*. Ed. Plarr, Victor. Edition 15. G. Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1899, p. 79.

<sup>158</sup> In her own handwriting Ouida notes on this letter: "The fiction which cannot live without the intervention of a middle man had better die", possibly referring to Mr. Bell and his volition in approaching Chatto rather than herself.

Gentlemen

Thanks very much for the pens. I am sorry you cannot make me a higher offer for a novel and I shall regret to leave your firm permanently.

With comps yours Ouida.

#### **44. 9 Sept 1893**

Gentlemen

Baron Tauchnitz is extremely desirous to publish some vol. of mine in November. I have a Vol. ready, never previously printed consisting of about 46000 words and rather more. What price will you give for it? Conditions are 1<sup>st</sup> that the payment be made on receipt of M.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> that it be printed and published as soon as practically? 3<sup>rd</sup> that the books be in appearance like S. Barbara<sup>159</sup> (£100) Tauchnitz. American and Continental rights to remain mine. Please telegraph me to save time.

#### **45. Sept. 10, 1893**

Since writing to you on Friday I have had a great grief my beloved mother died at noon today. Will you kindly send word as written on next page for insertion in Times and M. Post.<sup>160</sup>

Ouida

At her villa near Florence on Sept 10, from the effects of a fall, Susanne, Madame de la Ramee, nee Sutton; dearly loved and immeasurably mourned.

#### **Undated Letters**

#### **46. Sept 29 probably 1878**

I write a hasty line yesterday and add this to ask you kindly to see Yates and enquire when he intends to use the article I write at his request in March on Mr. Story?<sup>161</sup> I do not know what to

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<sup>159</sup> Published in 1891 by Chatto and Windus.

<sup>160</sup> As wished her mother's obituary was published in both newspapers. See "Births, Deaths, Marriages and Obituaries". *The Morning Post* (London, England). Friday, September 15, 1893. Issue 37835, p. 1. and "Deaths". *The Times*. Friday, Sep 15, 189. Issue 34057, col A, p. 1.



say to the family who gave me all the details and were naturally expecting to see it printed in a month or so. Mr Yates is very ungrateful to be rude to me. Would you like a new? Letter ? of mine for the new quarterly. I find one half finished that would suit you. Please kindly send me positives of Mr. Mallock's<sup>162</sup> here. Yours truly Ouida.

#### 47. October 25 1878?<sup>163</sup>

Dear Mr. Chatto

I am beyond measure pained at the delay of printing. It causes me great difficulties with others. With Mr. Chapman the manager of Bradbury's<sup>164</sup> sent me all proofs and I sent him all M.S and proofs. I think it was a far quicker way. It is beyond expression distressing to lose the autumn season. Will you please send me 2 "Findelkind"? sincerely yours Ouida.

#### 48.

[...] I am amazed at "Henry Greville" (Mme Durnand)<sup>165</sup> bringing out a romance about "Ariadne". Do enquire among your literary friends and legal friends if international copyrights do not extend to the protection of titles? I fear England is connected to the war madness for which the Press is so guiltily responsible. Yours sincerely Ouida.

#### 49.

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<sup>161</sup> William Wetmore Story (1819-1896) was a sculptor and writer. Warner, Charles Dudley. *A Library of the World's Best Literature - Ancient and Modern - Vol.XXXV (Forty-Five Volumes)*; Southey-Suetonius. Cosimo, Inc., 2008, p.4051. I was unable to find an article about Mr. Story published by Ouida.

<sup>162</sup> Peters, J. N. "Mallock, William Hurrell (1849-1923)". *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34845>

<sup>163</sup> This letter must be dated after 1878 since *Findelkind* was published in 1880.

<sup>164</sup> Bradbury, William Hardwick (1832-1892) was a publisher and co-owner of the printing and publishing firm Bradbury and Evans. Patten, Robert L. "Bradbury, William Hardwick (1832-1892)". *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56409>.

"Chapman had paid Ouida £800 for the rights to the first edition (of *Ariadne*), and she submitted her revised proofs to his printers, Bradbury, Agnew, & Co; Chapman was then paid £1000 by Chatto for the joint rights to the novel, and both publishers' names appear on the frontispiece". See *The Victorians and Italy: Literature, Travel, Politics and Art*. Eds. Vescovi, Alessandra Luisa Villa and Paul Vita. Milan: Polimetrica S.a.s., 2009, p. 63.

<sup>165</sup> Alice Marie Celeste Durand was French authoress who wrote under the pseudonym *Henry Greville*. See *Men and Women*, 1899: 322.

Dear Mr Chatto

I see in Times that Mr Payn proposes that all American reprint of English Books should be freely sold in England. This is simply suicide! Pray tell me if any proposition so iniquitous and ruinous is really being entertained? In haste

Hotel de Italia Roma

Ouida

## **50. 1878? 79<sup>166</sup>**

Villa Farinola pres Florence

Gentlemen

If you will send me the Play on “Chandos”<sup>167</sup> registered I will return it at once in perusal. If well done there is no reason to refuse my sanctions; it contains very admirable situations for the stage; “under Two Flags” does the same. Tell Mrs Lynn Lynton with my compliments that I entirely agreed with her article on women in Belgravia and am extremely glad that she wrote me. I beg to remain yours obediently L. de la R. Ouida

## **Correspondence to Anderson Rose and Chapman and Hall**

### **1869-1887**

#### **1869 Jan-June**

#### **51. 9 June 1869**

Dear Mr Rose

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<sup>166</sup> This letter must be addressed to Chapman and Hall and dated in 1876 when Lynn Linton wrote an article for the Belgravia about women. Linton, E. Lynn. “Woman's Place in Nature and Society”. *Belgravia: A London Magazine* 29:115 (May 1876): 349-363.

<sup>167</sup> *Chandos* was published in 1866 by Chapman and Hall. Its dramatisation was performed on stage in 1882. *The Continent; An Illustrated Weekly Magazine* 2. Ed. Tourgée, Albion W. Our Continent Publishing Company, 1882. However, it is not clear whether it is the dramatisation Ouida and Chapman are corresponding about: “A dramatic version of *Chandos* is being prepared for presentation on the London stage. This will set *Ouida* on the offensive and defensive again”. *The American Bookseller: A Semi-Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Book, Stationery, News, and Music Trades* 13. Eds. American Book Trade Association. The American News Company, 1882, p.599.

Can you do me the pleasure to come to breakfast with me tomorrow morning? You kindly said it was no trouble to take the Langham<sup>168</sup> on route your office and I have some more letters to show you. Very sincerely yours L. de la R.

### **1870 June- Dec**

#### **52. Sept. 8 1870**

[...] Mr. Chapman has been quite punctual hitherto in his engagements....What hideous wants (the siege of Paris from Prussians and Germans)<sup>169</sup> have transpired since we met!

#### **53. Sept 12**

[...] What appalling wants we are witnessing! I feel quite stunned by them and cannot imagine a world without Paris. Pon Pemberton<sup>170</sup> was a great friend of mine and the wittiest of creatures.

#### **54. Sept. 28 1870**

[...] I hope you like "Puck"<sup>171</sup> and that you will like his moralising and misfortune. [...]

#### **55. November 1 1870**

Imperial Hotel Tarquay

Dear Mr. Rose

I am still hew and very sorry that you did not come in from Bristol. I am glad to say that Mr. Chapman has been very punctual in the fortnightly payments. But I now greatly want a £100 in excess of these. Will it complicate matters with him if I ask him now in the £100 he is to pay "on or before" our next publication. Or if I ask him to let me have at interest one of the three hundred pounds my American Publisher is going to pay me for the next Book? Will you do me the kindness to tell me this, by return, for the people I want to pay the £100 are very urgent and

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<sup>168</sup> Ouida lived in the Langham hotel in London from 1866 until 1871 when she moved to Florence. In *A Companion to Sensation Fiction* edited by Pamela Gilbert, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p.220.

<sup>169</sup> The siege of Paris took place in 1870 until 1871.

<sup>170</sup> Boase, Frederic. *Modern English Biography: Containing Many Thousand Concise Memoirs of Persons Who Have Died Between the Years 1851-1900*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Frank Cass, 1965.  
Christopher Peach Pemberton was a Times correspondent at the Franco-Prussian war where he died in 1870.

<sup>171</sup> Published in 1870 by Chapman and Hall.

won't wait for my return to London at Christmas. I want something that will not affect the legal and punctual payments fortnightly. I hope you are well and liking "Puck". "Under Two Flags" is to be dramatised again which will break the "Firefly"? pirates' monopoly thereof. Believe me always your friend. L. R.

**56. 22 Nov. 1870**

Tuesday Tarquay

Dear Mr. Rose

[...] I cannot get any response from Mr. Chapman on the subject and he has been very tardy with his fortnightly cheques of late? And has not yet sent the one for the 15<sup>th</sup> of November [...] Can you also hint to him amicably that this continual irregularity in sending the fortnightly cheques is tiresome and gives me so much trouble in writing for them every time. I wish greatly you had given us the pleasure of seeing you here. The country has not been overrated and the lanes perfectly lovely. At this we have in the gardens violets mignonette roses and all sorts of still green foliage.

**1871 Jan.**

**57. 3 January 1871**

Dear Mr Rose Mr Chapman must be mad, or I don't know what. As you will know, accounts were closed between us up to midsummer and since then I have only had the £25 cheque fortnightly. Save the £126 for "Puck" which he paid after signing the agreements. He makes me (from some date untold) his debtor for £1400!!! I think I should be able to get the money for S and S elsewhere at once (till Lippincott's comes in this month) and if you will send me any legal form by which I can empower you to [?] the fortnightly cheques for me I will have no more to do with Mr Chapman until I tell him my opinion of him on my return to Town. I believe he cannot withhold the fortnightly cheques on any plea and can be county courted if he do not pay? I am quite ashamed to intrude on you at such a time of sorrow with my affairs and cannot thank you enough for so kindly giving them your attention at the very moment of your mother's loss. I had written this far when your note arrived. What can Mr. Chapman mean? Since the agreements were signed I have only had the £25 a fortnight [?] and £10 (ten pound) he send me last week when I wrote for £60 for S and S. I entirely and unequivocally deny that he has advanced a

penny besides the monthly sum due by the agreement. I think I should be able to get you by Thursday or Friday the £50 for just S&S. They will be quiet till then will they not? I enclose Mr. Chapman's letter herein he says they shall have the money; not a bill. So many many thanks for all your assistance.

### 58. January 2 1871

My dear Miss Rame,

I have seen Mr. Rose this morning and he told me that Sark will sue you unless you pay them something. I have agreed to let you have our note of hand for £100 -. at a short [?] on the condition of your first sending here as much M.S. as you have ready for the printer. Pray do this by return, as you know I cannot act now on my own responsibility. You, now to Leur 31, once in £799. 1. 9 and this £100-. That I have agreed to let you have will be all that you are entitled to draw for the new novel. I would therefore strongly urge you to practise economy and remain away from London for some months to come. I who told Mr. rose that for some time to come that you should only draw £40-.- a month, to which he certainly thought you would agree. I have given Mr. Rose a letter that he has taken to Mr Sark stating that on receipt? Of the M.S., they will receive the money. If you send the M.S. by Rail monthly > it will reach us safely. Yours sincerely Edw. Chapman.

Drawings to Leur 31/70                      1499. 1. 9

6<sup>th</sup>?

By cheap editions 474 -

“ further s... + 100

“ and further s.... 126

700

700 –

£799. 1. 9.

### 59. Jan. 5 1871

Dear Mr Rose

I add a line to my letter on reflection I do feel that Mr. Chapman after such unwarrantable statements ought to make me some reparation. If can say such things to you what may he not say to those who do not know me?!! I think that he ought to give you for S and S a cheque for £90

(as he sent me £10 from the £100 due) and if he do this at one I will then send you for him the first 100 pages of the M.S. All this to be independent of the £25 a fortnight which is due for 1<sup>st</sup> Jan and for which I will sign any authority that you may direct me so that your clerk may always get it for me on each 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. I'm afraid that my other monies won't come in for 2 or 3 weeks; and I do feel Mr. Chapman owes me some amends. With warmest thanks ever yours truly indebted L. de la R.

#### **60. 26 Jan 1871**

[...] Can you make Mr. Chapman understand that I cannot submit to such treatment and that I am more amazed at it than I can express....Pray, if it be not asking too much, do make Mr Chapman pay you the cheque for January for S and S. and tell him he must send the February 1<sup>st</sup> cheque by its proper date. Do not give him the M.S, unless he pays all.

#### **61. January 27 1871**

Dear Mr. Rose

It is too intolerable of Mr. Chapman. When he signed those agreements did he sign meaning to break them? Since the day of their signature I have had the fortnightly sums of £25 up to December 15 and the sum of £126 for the cheap edition of "Puck" as agreed. Nothing else. I conclude that under these circumstances it is impossible for Mr. Chapman and Hall to avoid or repudiate their arrangements? If he have the M.S. it must be on the distinct understanding that those quibble and annoyances cease once for all; and that the fortnightly payments shall be made on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month as stated without any attempt to delay or evade them. Each letter of Mr. Chapman is a contradiction of the preceding one. 2nd Post in No cheque. I shall be glad to begin to print, but it must be on condition that he pays all present and future sums correctly. I think that he ought also to give some guarantee that he will do this since he twists and turns agreements thus. Believe me dear Mr Rose with sincere obligation to you for all the infinite trouble of this matter. Always yours indebted L. de la R.

#### **62. 31 March 1871**

[...] Did you notice that Mr. Chapman takes off 5 per cent from the price for "Folle Farine"? Of course he cannot claim to do so?? I should think we have better wait till the 15 April, and then

make him give the £50 that will be due for bimonthly payments and a note of hand for the £100 before he gets the concluding chapters of this when we must.

**63. 24 May 1871**

[...] I cannot write more, - The news of Paris kills me.

**64. 27 march 1871**

[...] I do think it very hard indeed that Mr. Chapman should not make any compensation for all the annoyance he has so utterly needlessly caused. [...]

**65. June 1 1871**

I hear from a sure source that Mr. Chapman refusals to pay are amounting to a mania. I am told he is in the habit of disputing everything until forced to pressure. To a gentleman whose veracity is unimpeachable he swore money had been paid into -a well known bank- on enquiry the banks had never received a penny. Today he owes me £225. I hear he is living extravagantly as usual and disputing all his engagements. What can I do?

**66. June 29 1871**

Dear Mr Rose

I send the completion of Folle Farine but please on no account give it him unless he gives in exchange a Bill for one month (or two) for the £100 and the two twenty fives due for Jun. I know he will yield if we be firm and he as good as confessed yesterday that he felt some claim for compensation could be urged in addition against him which would indeed only be fair and just since he has involved us in so much needless and objectless dispute. It will be understood that the Book will not be published until the day on which the bill shall be payable.

**67. (?) 1871**

Dear Mr. Rose

What in heaven's name is to be done? Pray come up and see me. I shall be at home all this evening. Yours in haste ever sincerely L. de la .R

**68. July 1871**

[...] You know what entire confidence I have in your judgement. [...]

**69. August 6 1871**

I wish Mr. Chapman would not keep advertising it as out when it is not. It does a book a great deal of injury. People ask for it, and cannot get it, and grow tired of asking.

**1871 Sept-Dec****70. September 29 1871**

...What do you think of “Folle Farine”<sup>172</sup>? I am very anxious to know. Lord Lytton thinks it is work of “rare genius” – a great “prose poem”.

**71. 30 October 1871**

[...] Mr Trollope<sup>173</sup> is of opinion that the more advertisements by the Canadian House is matter for money damage and says it is a theft cutting direct to the root of every literary interest and property.

**1874 Jan- April****72. Feb 2 1874**

[...] It is a hideous loss but what can I do<sup>174</sup>. [...]

**1874 June-Dec****73. December 8**

[...] I cannot think that Mr Chapman has any right yet to sell to Chatto. [...]

**74. December 31 1874**


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<sup>172</sup> Published in 1871 by Chapman and Hall.

<sup>173</sup> Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was an English writer. See John N. Hall's, “Trollope, Anthony (1815–1882)”. In *ODNB*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, May 2006.  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27748>.

<sup>174</sup> Ouida accepts to get paid £1500 for selling all the copyrights of her novels published before 1874.



As soon as we have arranged for the new novel with C. we will attack him for permitting Chatto and Windus to sell Wooden SHOES<sup>175</sup>. He has no possible right to have added it to their list and in compensation thereof I wish to have the right to repurchase all copyrights whenever I may desire at the same sum with moderate interest according to time elapsed. Mr Chapman really ought to pay me for the great annoyance he entails on me by his delay in arranging for the new novel.

#### **75. December 31 1874**

[...] The whole £1500 was to have been paid in this year; now expired.

#### **1875-1876**

#### **76. 1875 or 1876<sup>176</sup>**

Dear Mr Chapman

I propose that we shall agree as follows:

You to pay me £100 a month for twenty months, beginning 1<sup>st</sup> February 1875 i.e. this coming 1<sup>st</sup> February. I to give you, for this, the use for five years of the forthcoming 3 vol. novel; of another 3 vol novel in twelve months time; and of a short one volume story; I to retain all rights of translation and reproduction on the continent and in America and the colonies. In fine our old terms of agreement. This is the very least that I can take and in making this reduction I practically fall in with your own terms as nearly as may be. And at the present moment owing to the immense increase of my continental reputation I naturally look for high and not lower prices. If you close with this, please tell Mr Rose to whom I send copy of this, and he will kindly draw out a short agreement. Magazines are not to be [?] of for me; and in the case of the now ready novel B. Tauchnitz having already paid me for it and all over [?] translations being waiting for it. Delay in it issue is really serious to me. I was much pained as your parting with the copyright to a strange publisher and I believe I parted with them to your house alone and I particularly wished the arrangement to have been kept private [...]

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<sup>175</sup> *Bébée or Two Little Wooden Shoes* was published in 1874 by Chapman and Hall.

<sup>176</sup> Sends this copy to Rose which is a letter she has sent to Chapman on January the 25<sup>th</sup>

**77. 1877?**

I have remotely heard by a curious chance that the copyrights he gave me £1500 for he sold to C and W for £400 and £500 a piece . In all some £4000 or £5000. For Ariadne he received £1000 down.

**1877****78. July 22 1877<sup>177</sup>**

Dear Mr Chapman

Whilst awaiting your reply relative to Chatto and win [sic] I have chanced to hear from persons of interest the details of your transactions with that Firm regarding my works, the prices received [?] both as regards the older reprints and the recent works, including Ariadne. I am sure you know as well as I do that I could have stopped these latter transfers. Three years ago I refused [?] C and Windus solicitations and offers as did Mr. Rose for me. Their purchase of works of which their copyright remain mine has no legality without my concurrence and consent. In my arrangements with you I hold the publication by your old established and honourable House and part, and a considerable part, of my payment. Three years ago C and W. offered me a “bonus” of £100 in excess [?] on each novel if I would turn over my agreement with you to them; I refused; preferring to remain with your Firm than to obtain the extra money. My books are now given over to them and I have not even this small compensation. Men of business have offered to see C and W for me; But I think it better to write direct to you and hope to have your cooperation if you will out? For and with me it will be much best for every one. Please do see C and W at once and tell them what I have said. Also that I expect from them as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> The payment by them to me at once of that “bonus” of £100 on each work as offered by them to me previous to the publication of Signa. 2<sup>nd</sup> The purchase by them in six months time from me of the copyrights of the four works belonging to me, at £500 each work, £2000 in all. Both you and they will see the justice of this, and I feel you will like better to negotiate it than for me to employ any third person to do so. If necessary I would come to London, but I hope that It will not be so. Please arrange this and answer me in a few days as possible and believe me always sincerely yours Ouida

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<sup>177</sup> Sends a copy of this letter to Rose

## **Rose's correspondence to Ouida**

### **Memoranda for agreements:**

**79. 5 Dec. 1877**

Dear Miss De la Ramé;

Let me have a copy of your letter to Chatto and Windus and their reply as soon as possible. With regard to Chapman and Hall's transfer of your novels to Chatto and Windus it appears to me that Chapman has a right to sell what he has bought and no more, to Chatto and Windus and that the extreme cases suggested by you and your friends as to Wych street and Hollywell H. publishers does not apply. The question is what is the position of Chatto and Windus. I believe at the present time that their position is as good or better than Chapman and certainly they have command of more capital. It is true that the Old firm published some queer books but these books have been for some time eliminated from their advertisements. Suppose you were to bring an Action and claim damages on the assumption that Chatto and Windus were not respectable publishers! Why they would call dozens perhaps hundreds of respectable witness in the Literary World to swear that they were most respectable Publishers. Indeed I am not at all sure that it would not be for your interest to come to some arrangement direct? For Chatto and Windus to publish for you. Your case as to Chatto and Windus sending out large quantities of the cheap edition of your novels to America stands on a different feeling. And you may have a good case if it be as understands that Chapman's agreement with you was exclusive of the American market and that this was part of the Agreement and has been mentioned in your receipts to Chapman and has been acted upon for years- that up to a very recent date Lippincott paid you a considerable sum (£300 for each novel) for the early sheets- which were sent to Lippincott by Chapman- who knew the arrangement between you and Lippincott and that the American market was reserved. Under the circumstances if Chatto and Windus have flooded the American market with cheap editions of course Lippincott will make no further arrangement with you. For instance I understand that your agreement with Chapman as to "Ariadne" was that the cheap edition should not be published till the expiration of the 12 months after the full priced edition whereas Chatto and Windus have published the cheap edition within 4 months of the publication of the full priced edition so that your interests would be seriously damaged in the diminished sale of the full

priced edition and by the refusal of Lippincott to make terms with you if the American market is flooded by the cheap edition of Chatto and Windus. With regard to your letter of December 22<sup>nd</sup> I have not taken any proceedings against Chatto and Windus and of course therefore I gave them the option of amicable compromise. I informed them that I was instructed by to take legal proceedings and my object was to get from Chatto and Windus some statement of what they considered their case. They are shrewd sort of people and they very wisely referred me to their solicitors<sup>178</sup>.

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<sup>178</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1877 after a meeting with both publishers Rose writes to Ouida that they are afraid they are going to take them to court and it will damage both firms dreadfully and that “chapman contemplates leading business himself and in that actuation cares little what becomes of me or anybody”. They have entered a 6 year partnership (Chatto and Chapman) and they promise never to serialise any of her works again (This is letter that I have read in the Berg Collection but did not have the opportunity to transcribe). In 1882 however they pressure her into serialising *Princess Napraxine* but she vehemently refuses. A year later yields to this pressure due to the decrease of her sales and *Othmar*, the first novel ever serialised with her permission, is published.